Daily Report

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Inter-Arab Affairs

Arab Coordination Meeting Concludes in Damascus

Delegates Assess Meeting

JN2903153293 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1246 GMT 29 Mar 93

[Interviews with Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar', Lebanese Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz, Palestinian delegate Sa'ib 'Urayqat, PLO Political Department head Faruq Qaddumi, and Jordanian Foreign Minister Kamil Abu-Jabir by Damascus radio correspondents 'Imad Naddaf and Fu'ad 'Isa, in Damascus on 29 March]

[Text] Following today's meetings, radio correspondents 'Imad Naddaf and Fu'ad 'Isa conducted interviews with Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' and a number of delegation heads on their assessment of the results of the meetings.

Al-Shar' made an exclusive statement to Damascus radio in which he said:

[Begin recording] [Al-Shar'] We are satisfied with the results of this meeting. There is a unified Arab position. All the participating Arab delegations approved the final statement.

[Correspondent] Do you consider this postponement a new opportunity for the peace process?

[Al-Shar'] We hope that obstacles will be removed from the road to resuming the peace process.

[Correspondent] How do you view the situation of the deportees in southern Lebanon?

[Al-Shar'] We sympathize with the Palestinian deportees. We are also exerting efforts for their quick return to their homes and families. [end recording]

Lebanese Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz also spoke to Damascus radio about these meetings, their importance, and their outcome, saying:

[Begin recording] [Buwayz] Indeed, this conference epitomizes the spirit of a unified Arab position with regard to the peace process. I can safely say that the atmosphere that permeated the conference was excellent. There was an expected harmony as well as a normal convergence of views among the parties concerned. This conference has given us the opportunity to review all aspects of the peace process as well as the problems precluding the desired progress. The most important thing is that the unity of ranks has been safeguarded. Additionally, the statement issued by the conferees embodies a unified position, which is as important as the (?principle).

[Correspondent] Mr. Faris Buwayz: Could we say that the adjournment of the talks to a later time is an attempt by the Arabs to give the peace talks a new opportunity so that these talks may be back on track?

[Buwayz] The adjournment of this meeting will give the Arab parties the opportunity to conduct a more careful examination of the situation regarding the peace process. Similarly, this will also allow for holding intense contacts to clarify a host of issues—developments in which could warrant the holding of further negotiations. As you are well aware, His Excellency President Husni Mubarak's Washington visit is in the offing. Of course, he will carry with him some Arab concerns and doubts. He might bring some clarifications. Besides, some delegation members will shortly leave for Washington for talks with the U.S. side in order to get a clearer picture of the situation. Then, we will take a position in light of new developments.

[Correspondent] Mr. Faris: Once again, we would like to ask you about the Lebanese position with regard to the deportee issue. How do you view this position now, given the talks the foreign ministers have just concluded?

[Buwayz] As a matter of fact, the Lebanese position vis-a-vis this issue remains firm. Lebanon demands the immediate and unconditional implementation of Resolution 799. The implementation of this resolution will create a propitious climate for generating confidence in the peace process. Furthermore, we also believe that the deportee issue is not the only issue that needs to be discussed. There are other aspects of the peace process, on which we are seeking clarifications. As already mentioned in the joint statement, we have questions about the meaning of the strategic ally mentioned in the final statement issued at the conclusion of the Israeli prime minister's Washington visit. Moreover, we need confirmation of the seriousness of the U.S. role. You are well aware that we wagered on a positive and effective U.S. role rather than on Israeli credibility when we got engaged in the peace process. If this role fails to be characterized by such traits, this will have negative repercussions on the peace process. The U.S. role is a basic role, one of a catalyst pushing for peace. Given that it is currently a powerful superpower, the United States is required to play the role of a just and fair arbiter to help in the implementation of the resolutions of international legitimacy.

[Correspondent] We recently noticed that Israel has been stepping up its aggressions in southern Lebanon. Likewise, it has stepped up its savage practices in the occupied Arab territories. How do the Arab foreign ministers view this issue?

[Buwayz] Of course this Israeli escalation reflects a negative attitude toward the peace process. It reflects a decision to maneuver in the peace talks. We still believe that Israel has engaged itself in the peace process just to absolve itself of any blame or censure by the international community. Regardless of the fact that the circumstances are propitious and that the Arabs have shown a favorable response, Israel has thus far failed to take any

position reflecting a serious desire to achieve the desired peace spoken of by this conference.

[Correspondent] At the end of this interview, we would like to thank Lebanese Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz. You are most welcome at Damascus radio.

[Buwayz] Thanks. [end recording]

Sa'ib 'Urayqat, member of the Palestinian delegation to the peace talks, spoke about the atmosphere of the meetings and the Israeli practices. Responding to a question on his impression of the meetings, 'Urayqat said:

[Begin recording] ['Urayqat] In fact, the results are quite positive. We have emerged with a unified Arab stance. This is what is essential. Arab coordination has once again proved that it is the guarantee for the Arab participation in the peace process. The statement is clear. It is not merely a press statement. It is a strong, clear, and explicit message addressed to the cosponsors, saying that the Arabs have joined the peace process to reach a comprehensive peace based on justice and UN Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, and 425. The Arabs want peace, but not at any price. In fact, the Damascus meeting is a pivotal meeting. I am convinced that the U.S. Administration will fully understand the content of the statement. I believe that continuing to treat Israel as a state above the law, the continued bargaining over UN Security Council resolutions, and the continued Israeli intransigence place the peace process in great jeopardy.

[Correspondent] Speaking of the Israeli practices, Israel today imposed a comprehensive siege on the Gaza Strip. Do you view these Israeli practices as a new development facing the peace talks, which will be resumed in April?

['Urayqat] In fact, since 1967, Israel has never ceased violating Palestinian human rights and has never stopped repression. Today, a siege aimed at starving 800,000 Palestinian citizens was imposed on Gaza. Houses in the West Bank, Gaza, and Jerusalem are being demolished with antitank rockets. Israeli death squads are sowing indiscriminate death in the occupied territories. Still, the United States continues to deal with it as a state above the law. This poses a danger not only to the Palestinian people, but also to the peace process as a whole. Consequently, this places the future of the region in jeopardy. We have joined the peace process in order to define the features of the region in the future. Therefore, it is high time the U.S. Administration acted as a fair sponsor of the conference and stopped dealing with Israel as a state above the law.

[Correspondent] Thank you brother Sa'ib. [end recording]

Faruq Qaddumi, head of the PLO Political Department, also spoke. He said:

[Begin recording] [Qaddumi] The first result of the Damascus coordination meeting is that there is a unified Arab stand toward the peace process. Our views were identical, and we stressed the need to remove obstacles so the peace process can resume. Israel should abide by international legitimacy and implement the Security Council resolutions. In this meeting, the Arabs have affirmed their care for the continuation of this process and emphasized the need to remove the obstacles facing it.

[Correspondent] Did your delegation submit any working paper or ideas to the Damascus meetings?

[Qaddumi] There was no need to submit a working paper. There is, however, the deportee problem, which we clearly highlighted. The deportees must return home. More than four [as heard] months have passed and the deportees have not yet returned home, taking into account that the Security Council condemned this deportation process, vehemently denounced Israel, and decided that the deportees should return home immediately.

[Correspondent] The Damascus coordination meetings aim to unify the Arab stand toward the peace process. Can you tell us about the importance of both Arab coordination and unification of stands at this stage?

[Qaddumi] It is not only a matter of unifying the Arab stands. In fact, the Arab stands are similar, and there are no remarkable differences among them, although the tracks are different. The coordination meetings aim at cooperation and coordination in every phase. At the very beginning, we decided to hold periodic meetings in order to assess the previous phase of the peace process and work out our plans for the coming phase. Based on this, large-scale coordination and cooperation have continued among the five parties, and we managed to overcome many difficulties and obstacles. Moreover, such coordination and cooperation not only takes place on the level of ministers but also on the level of delegations, so they exchange information and views at the location of negotiations in Washington.

[Correspondent] What is your view of the prospects for the peace process at a time when Israel is continuing its attempts to split the Arab ranks?

[Qaddumi] The time when Israel used to split the Arab ranks is over. Israel is suffering a historic impasse, particularly after the cold war has ended. We care much for the peace process and for finding a just and comprehensive solution to the Middle East crisis, provided, of course, that we regain our national rights. From the outset, the U.S. initiative specified the terms and bases of this process, namely, international legitimacy. If everyone abides by this legitimacy, then peace, stability, and security will be achieved in this region. However, Israel's actions and repressive practices against the Palestinian people clearly indicate that the Israeli rulers are still intransigent and reject this international atmosphere which is appropriate for achieving peace. Israel is still the hotbed of tension in the region.

[Correspondent] Are you optimistic about the new U.S. Administration and its stand on the peace process?

[Qaddumi] We are optimistic about ourselves, and we will not be optimistic aobut the U.S. Administration. This is so because this Administration constantly announces its support for Israel's military superiority, regards Israel as a strategic ally, and always tries to back Israel with all means available. We believe in, and are optimistic about, the unified Arab stand and the world peace forces which support us.

[Correspondent] Thank vou very much. [end recording]

Finally, Jordanian Foreign Minister Dr. Kamil Abu-Jabir spoke to Damascus radio, and said, in answer to a question about the results of the Damascus coordination meetings:

[Begin recording] [Abu-Jabir] I believe that all the participants proposed ideas and expressed opinions that were very clear, rational, and realistic. The issue is not that of achieving stands, but how to be able to reach a unified Arab position which will help and protect all of us. From the very beginning of these coordination meetings, we have hoped and still hope that these meetings will mark the beginning of reuniting this nation.

[Correspondent] As you know, the Damascus coordination meetings are aimed at unifying the Arab position toward the peace process, can you brief us on the importance of Arab coordination and the unifying of positions at this critical stage?

[Abu-Jabir] I believe that Arab coordination is very important for the reasons I mentioned in my previous answer. This is because Arab coordination strengthens us and helps us surmount obstacles.

[Correspondent] How do you view the future of the peace process?

[Abu-Jabir] The future of the peace process hinges on several factors. Among these factors is the other side's readiness abandon its ideological trench, and to begin to work for reaching a just and comprehensive peaceful solution based on the resolutions of international legitimacy, the land for peace formula, recognizing the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, withdrawal from territories including Jerusalem, and withdrawal from the Golan Heights and Jordanian and Lebanese territory. Israel must not continue to be an exception to the resolutions of international legitimacy. This is not only in our interest, but also in the interest of the world, particularly while we are at the threshold of the 21st century. [end recording]

More on al-Shar' Statements

JN2903195693 Damascus Syrian Arab Television Network in Arabic 1843 GMT 29 Mar 93

[Interview with Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' by unidentified reporters at a news conference at the conclusion of the coordination meeting of the Arab foreign ministers concerned with the peace process in Damascus on 29 March—recorded]

[Text] [Reporter] Your Excellency the Minister: What is the Arab stand that Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa will deliver to the U.S. Administration?

[Al-Shar'] The statement is clear, and we came up with a unified Arab stand, which was expressed in that statement. Each paragraph expresses the collective opinion of the Arab parties participating in this meeting.

[Reporter] Your Excellency the Minister: Minister 'Amr Musa yesterday stated that the Syrian-Egyptian summit, the Palestinian-Egyptian summit, and the five-party meeting in Damascus constituted a complete file to be transferred to Washington. In your opinion, given these files, will President Mubarak's visit to Washington yield important results which will influence the cordon states' next meeting?

[Al-Shar'] No doubt, these meetings are important and help us all to remove the obstacles from the path of the peace process. Moreover, the United States extended to the Arab parties, which are participating in the peace process, invitations to hold prior consultations with the U.S. side—each Arab party with the U.S. side—on the prospects for the peace process before the resumption of the peace talks on 20 April.

[Reporter] If these consultations and contacts do not result in an acceptable solution and in removal of the obstacles to peace, will you participate or not?

[Al-Shar'] I can say that the reason behind keeping this meeting open is to hold further contacts with the cosponsors of the conference in order to remove the obstacles from the path of the peace process. This is obvious in the statement. When this coordination meeting resumes in Damascus appropriate decisions will be made.

[Reporter] Your Excellency the Minister: If the contacts are not fruitful, will there be an approach requesting the postponement of the ninth round?

[Al-Shar'] We adhere to the implementation of Resolution 799, which calls for the immediate return home of all Palestinian deportees, according to this resolution. Thank you.

Buwayz, Qaddumi Comment

JN2903110293 Damascus SANA in Arabic 0950 GMT 29 Mar 93

[Text] Damascus, 29 Mar (SANA)—Lebanese Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz has stressed that the current Damascus meeting is one of the most important coordination meetings held so far because it is being held amid very delicate and difficult circumstances.

In an interview with TISHRIN newspaper, Buwayz said the decision to deport the Palestinians constitutes a dangerous violation of Lebanon's sovereignty and is considered a dangerous precedent and great defiance.

On Syrian-Lebanese coordination, Buwayz said that coordination is good and in excellent shape on all levels,

and that there is agreement on all substantial and basic points, which demonstrates the unity of positions and ranks.

For his part, Faruq Qaddumi, head of the PLO Political Department also emphasized the special importance of the Damascus meeting. He said that the Israeli attempts to split Arab ranks means that the Arab negotiation position is becoming stronger.

Qaddumi said the deportee issue constitutes a difficult obstacle to a political settlement, and proves that Israel does not want peace.

Regarding Syrian-Palestinian coordination, Qaddumi said: Experience proves that whenever the Syrian-Palestinian position becomes firmer, this reflects positively on the other Arab positions, allows the peace process to continue its course without fear, strengthens the Arab negotiating position, and forces Israel to offer concessions for the sake of peace.

Foreign Ministers Depart

JN2903172593 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1615 GMT 29 Mar 93

[Text] Foreign ministers from the Arab states directly concerned with the peace process, and the delegations accompanying them, left Damascus this evening after concluding a two-day coordination meeting held in Damascus. They were seen off by Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar', senior Foreign Ministry officials, and the ambassadors of the Arab states which participated in this meeting.

'Abd-al-Majid Begins Tour of Austria, UK, Jordan

NC3003084593 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0624 GMT 30 Mar 93

[Text] Cairo, 30 Mar (MENA)—Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid left Cairo for Vienna today on a week-long tour of Austria, Britain, and Jordan.

Before his departure, Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid said he will attend the Islamic-Christian dialogue meeting today at the invitation of the Austrian Foreign Ministry. He said it is an important dialogue that confirms the harmony of heavenly religions.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid added that he will meet with Austrian Foreign Minister Alois Mock and other officials to discuss Austrian-Arab relations. He will then meet UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus-Ghali in London to brief him on the seven-member committee's recent meeting in Tunis, which discussed the Libyan-Western crisis.

He said that after a two-day visit to Britain, he will leave for Jordan for a meeting with King Husayn and several Jordanian officials to discuss recent Arab developments, the peace process, and the Palestinian deportee issue. He will also attend the opening meeting of the Arab Labor Organization.

Referring to the Kuwaiti POW issue, Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid said he recently met with Shaykh Salim al-Sabah, chairman of the Kuwaiti POW's Committee. He expressed hope that the Iraqi Government will be responsive to the Arab League's efforts and reply to its proposals on this matter so that a satisfactory solution may be reached and the Kuwaiti prisoners may return to their families.

Arab League Statement on Palestinian Land Day

NC3003101893 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 0900 GMT 30 Mar 93

[Text] The Arab League Secretariat issued a statement today, Land Day, condemning Israel's acts of repression against the Palestinians in the occupied Arab territories, noting that such acts will only produce further tension in the Middle East. The statement demanded the return of the Palestinian deportees to the occupied territories in line with UN Security Council Resolution 799. It also called for the creation of appropriate circumstances to bolster the regional peace process to attain a comprehensive, lasting, and just settlement.

The Arab League's statement praised the heroic Palestinian intifadah and urged the world community to provide protection for the Palestinian people.

GCC Official: Iraq, Iran Still 'Threat'

NC2603134293 Paris AFP in English 1233 GMT 26 Mar 93

[Text] Abu Dhabi, March 26 (AFP) - Iraq and Iran still pose a threat to their Arab neighbours, a senior Gulf official warned Friday [26 March].

Shaykh Fahim Bin-Sultan al-Qasimi, the secretary general-designate of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), cited Iraqi incursions into Kuwait and Iran's dispute with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) over three strategic islands.

"Dangers are still besetting GCC states as the Iraqi regime is still threatening Kuwait and violates its territory and United Nations resolutions," he told the official UAE news agency WAM.

"Iran also has not taken any initiative showing it intends to withdraw from the three occupied islands. This does not help stability in the region."

It was Shaykh Fahim's first public statement since he was chosen to replace 'Abdallah Bisharah at a GCC summit in December. Shaykh Fahim, from the UAE emirate of Ra's al-Khaymah, is to take up his post in April.

The dispute over Abu Musa and the nearby islands of Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb flared last year after the

UAE accused Iran of trying to annex Abu Musa in violation of an accord to share the island.

GCC foreign ministers will discuss the islands dispute when they meet in Riyadh on April 4, Shaykh Fahim said. Other issues include Iraq, the Middle East peace talks and the Palestinian deportees.

Shaykh Fahim, a law student from a U.S. university, scoffed at recent statements by Iran that the dispute had been settled. "If the problem has been resolved, then why are Iranian forces still on the islands?" he asked.

He said the UAE had "historic and legal documents that prove its ownership and sovereignty of the three islands."

U.S., European Energy Taxes Criticized

LD2703134293 Riyadh SPA in English 1229 GMT 27 Mar 93

[Text] Dubai, March 27, SPA—American and European plans to impose energy taxes on crude oil imports are illogical and will undermine Gulf economies, a senior Gulf Arab official was quoted as saying on Friday [26 March].

Shaykh Fahim Sultan al-Qasimi, who will take over as secretary-general of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] in April, told the Emirates News Agency WAM that the industrialised was following contradictory energy policies. [sentence as received]

"We see these countries forcing new taxes on petrol in the name of protecting environment from pollution, and at the same time some European countries are subsidising producers of coal, which has a higher carbon dioxide content than petrol," al-Qasimi told WAM.

Shaykh Fahim said the taxes were likely to dominate during the upcoming GCC ministerial gathering on April 4 in Riyadh and a meeting in Brussels in May between GCC and European Community ministers.

It is also expected to be discussed at next month's meeting of OPEC and non-OPEC ministers in Oman.

Islamic Affairs

Zagreb Paper Accuses ICO of Inaction on Bosnia

LD2603134493 Tehran IRNA in English 1309 GMT 26 Mar 93

[Text] Zagreb, March 26, IRNA—A Bosnian weekly here sharply criticized the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) [ICO] for being so silent towards the "conspiracy of the international community against Bosnian Muslims"

It warned that the genocide against Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina [B-H] was threatening the entire Balkans, and five million Muslims living in Western Europe as well as those in the former Soviet empire.

"LJILJAN" wondered in its latest edition why OIC member-states failed to take a radical position toward the international community, after their January 15 ultimatum expired.

An OIC emergency summit in Saudi Arabia set the ultimatum saying that if the international community fails to take any decisive action, like lifting of arms embargo against Bosnia, Muslim countries will take appropriate actions.

The OIC decision gave hope to Bosnian Muslims that they will not be left alone, and "their world factor of support" will be able to ensure the end of horrible crimes against Muslims in Bosnia, the editorial said.

The OIC states have financial resources, over 50 votes in the United Nations General Assembly, the oil and "above all, the sincere support of the Muslim people worldwide to prevent uprooting of Islam in Europe," it said further.

LJILJAN blamed the governments of Islamic states for not insisting on lifting of the UN embargo on arms delivery to Bosnia which, it said is necessary "for the defence of bare lives" in B-H.

It said that for OIC the tragic events of Muslim starvation in Srebrenica and massacre in nearby Cerska, overrun by the Serbs, "do not exist at all."

In an emotional appeal, the Zagreb-based Bosnian weekly called upon the "Islamic ocean" to "wake up and scream" urging help for Bosnian Muslims.

"Who can prevent you to demand lifting of the (arms) embargo? Break the ties with friends of our enemies, threaten (them) with your resources," it said.

LJILJAN wonders why the OIC governments " with a couple of exceptions" are inactive towards the "conspiracy of international community against Bosnia-Herzegovina, Islam and Muslims?".

It warned that anti-Muslim were poised to take over in Russia, which would open the way for "clear military assistance to Great-Serbian fascists."

The commentary urged OIC member-countries, to quit the United Nations in case the "uprooting" of Bosnian Muslims continues.

"Your (Bosnian) brothers in Islam," said the commentary "will die with clear conscious knowing who is their friend and who is the enemy, with no illusions any final political settlement for the crisis," it concluded.

Palestinian Affairs

U.S.-Palestinian 'Deal' on Deportees Reported

NC2903163593 Paris AFP in English 1530 GMT 29 Mar 93

[Text] Manama, March 29 (AFP) - U.S. and Palestinian officials have worked out a deal which would have Israel take back by August 396 Palestinian deportees stranded in south Lebanon, a Bahraini newspaper reported Monday [29 March].

The deal calls for the "incremental return of all the deportees before the end of August," the AL-AYYAM daily reported, quoting high-ranking Palestinian sources.

Israel expelled more than 400 Palestinians to a no-man's land in south Lebanon on December 17 after Palestinian Muslim fundamentalist groups claimed the killings of several Israeli soldiers.

The accord was hammered out by the Palestinian delegation which left Washington Sunday after talks with U.S. officials.

The Arabs and Israelis have been invited to resume negotiations—suspended after the expulsions—but the Palestinians have refused until the deportee crisis is resolved.

Besides the return of the deportees, the Palestinian negotiating team has asked Israel to renounce future expulsions.

Delegation spokeswoman Hanan 'Ashrawi said Sunday in Washington that both parties had to work further to overcome obstacles created by the mass expulsion on December 17.

She said a solution to the deportee crisis would need to be accepted by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Palestinian public opinion even if it does not bring an immediate return of the deportees.

U.S. officials told the Palestinian delegation of Israel's agreement to let a few dozen Palestinians deported in recent years return, AL-AYYAM said.

Faysal al-Husayni, who heads the Palestinian delegation's steering committee, on Friday emphasized the obstacles to resuming the talks but the U.S. Government said it had found a compromise in negotiating the incremental return of the Palestinians with Israel.

PLO chief Yasir 'Arafat on Sunday told the Egyptian news agency MENA that "positive signs" had emerged from the Washington meetings.

PLO To Hold Meeting on Peace Talks in Tunis

NC3003115993 Paris AFP in English 1104 GMT 30 Mar 93

[Excerpts] Tunis, March 30 (AFP) - Yasir 'Arafat will chair a meeting beginning here Saturday [3 April] of the PLO's leadership to review Arab and international efforts to revive the stalled Middle East peace talks, Palestinian sources said Tuesday.

The five-day Palestine Liberation Organization gathering will focus on the results of last week's talks in Washington between a Palestinian delegation and U.S. officials. [passage omitted]

'Arafat met President Husni Mubarak in Cairo on Monday ahead of the Egyptian leader's visit to the United States. The head of the PLO's political department, Faruq Qaddumi, is to meet European Community officials in Amman on Wednesday.

The Euro-Palestinian talks are the first since the beginning of the peace process in October 1991.

The Palestinian leadership's review comes after the Arab parties to the peace talks—Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and the Palestinians—ended an inconclusive meeting in Damascus at which they decided to postpone a decision on whether to attend the Washington negotiations. [passage omitted]

'Ashrawi Makes Statement After U.S. Visit

JN2903120093 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 29 Mar 93

[Interview with Hanan 'Ashrawi, spokesman for the Palestinian delegation to the Arab-Israeli talks, by Kawsab Samawi in Amman on 29 March—recorded]

[Text] ['Ashrawi] We had comprehensive, concise, and in-depth discussions on various issues. There have been many U.S. promises concerning the Israeli stands. However, we still need to continue work in order to produce a mechanism for action and to see practical steps on the ground.

[Samawi] It has been reported that you received U.S. support for your demands with respect to the six points. What is your comment?

['Ashrawi] There were serious and profound discussions on these and other issues. Words are not enough. It is high time intentions materialize through tangible stands and practical steps. The current stage is one of action, not promises and intentions.

[Samawi] Dr. Hanan, do you believe that in view of your talks in Washington, the Palestinian decision will now be closer to agreeing to take part in the ninth round of talks?

['Ashrawi] In fact, I do not want to make premature judgments. We are working on these issues. There is a meeting of the Palestinian leadership at the end of this

month. We hope that we have covered all practical issues, so that the leadership will be provided with all the facts that it needs to make the appropriate decision. In my opinion, the leadership will make a decision in accordance with a comprehensive analysis of all these matters and in light of the practical steps taken.

[Samawi] Actually, my question was inspired by the issue of the deportees. Israel, through its foreign minister, yesterday declared that there are no new Israeli initiatives on this issue?

['Ashrawi] Maybe there are no Israeli initiatives, and maybe there are other non-Israeli initiatives. However, there should be a radical and final solution to the deportee issue and deportations in general.

[Samawi] The Damascus meeting, which concluded today, left the door open with regard to participation or nonparticipation, leaving this question for further consultations. What is the gist of this decision?

['Ashrawi] It reflects a committed and principled Arab stance with respect to refraining from any separate moves and to coordinating Arab responses and steps so as to maintain a cohesive Arab stance reflecting unified stands and joint interests. I believe this is a logical outcome because there are still pending issues. The Arab parties know that the unity and coordination of decisions should take into consideration all issues and the Palestinian demands.

'Ashrawi on Talks With Christopher, Mubarak Visit

NC3003095993 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0920 GMT 30 Mar 93

[Text] Amman, 30 Mar (MENA)—The Palestinian delegation's official spokeswoman Dr. Hanan 'Ashrawi stated that President Husni Mubarak's talks with U.S. President Bill Clinton will be an opportunity to present the Arab view on the way to establish a just and comprehensive regional peace. She said that Egypt is an influential country in the region and plays an important role in the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

'Ashrawi told MENA: We discussed all the pertinent issues with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher in a comprehensive and detailed manner. These issues included the status of Jerusalem, deportation, Israeli human rights violations in the occupied territories, and peace developments. There were positive signs from the Americans on these issues.

Regarding Jerusalem, Dr. 'Ashrawi said that the Americans reiterated their firm position on the status of the city and noted that, as stated in the invitation to the Madrid Conference, this issue is negotiable.

Asked if the Palestinian delegation will visit Washington another time, 'Ashrawi said the United States has invited the Arab parties to make further consultations with U.S. officials. She remarked: The Palestinians are now following up developments, and after making an assessment of these developments, it will become clear whether we will go to Washington another time or not.

'Urayqat Notes 'Cohesion' Among Delegation

JN2803122493 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 28 Mar 93 p 4

[Interview with Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat, member of the Palestinian delegation to the peace talks by Tal'at Shana'ah in Amman; date not given]

[Excerpts] [Shana'ah] Is there a readiness to fill the security and political vacuum if Israel withdraws from the Gaza Strip?

['Urayqat] We seek the liberation of our land. Our people, who have proved their steadfastness and sacrifices in their immortal resistance of occupation that is aimed at eliminating this occupation, are capable of shouldering their responsibilities toward any part of land that is liberated. [passage omitted]

[Shana'ah] Are there Egyptian ambitions in the Gaza Strip, especially in light of the expected visit to Israel by President Husni Mubarak to convince Rabin's government to withdraw from Gaza? What is your opinion?

['Urayqat] I heard rumors about President Mubarak's visit to Israel, and I inquired officially about this and the answer was that there are no plans for this visit. The Egyptian position is known and it supports the national rights of the Palestinian people and the Palestinian identity. Coordination between the Egyptian and Palestinian leaderships is continuing, and I do not believe President Mubarak's visit to Israel will take place.

[Shana'ah] After all that has happened, do you trust the U.S. assurances?

['Urayqat] I do not use the term trust in politics. In my opinion, politics are based on interests, certain circumstances, and specific cases. The United States has become the sponsor of the peace process in accordance with its interests and how it envisages the Middle East map after the year 2000. The issue is based on joint understanding between the United States and the parties to the Middle East crisis on defining and respecting the interests of each party. However, it is noted that the United States takes care of its interests and those of Israel and ignores the Arab interests, and that is why the peace process falters.

[Shana'ah] We heard that there are different viewpoints among the members of the Palestinian delegation. How far will this affect the negotiations?

['Urayqat] The Palestinian delegation groups individuals who are assigned a task by their leadership in the PLO. We, as a delegation, do not make decisions but implement them like any other delegation. I can say that there is cohesion in views and priorities, and this is something on which all agree. [passage omitted]

[Shana'ah] There are Israeli attempts and talk about separate solutions with Arab parties. How do you view the result of these attempts?

['Urayqat] As you said, Israel has been trying for some time to raise doubts and fears among the Arab parties by manipulating talk about the possibility of reaching a separate peace with this or that Arab party. [passage omitted]

Al-Husayni Comments on Washington Talks

JN3003102593 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 30 Mar 93 pp 28, 22

[By Tawfiq 'Abid]

[Text] Faysal al-Husayni, head of the Steering Committee of the Palestinian negotiating team, has said that certain signs have emerged during his meeting with senior U.S. State Department officials, but that these signs need to be examined and interpreted.

Interviewed by AL-DUSTUR on his return from Washington, al-Husayni said that the signs needed in-depth study and accurate information so as to evaluate their positive impact. He pointed out that he sent a detailed report on his talks with U.S. officials to Palestinian president Yasir 'Arafat.

The Palestinian leadership postponed its scheduled meeting until 4 April so as to have a chance to assess the outcome of the delegation's visit to Washington and the meeting of the foreign ministers of the cordon states concluded in Damascus yesterday evening.

Al-Husayni said the signs have to do mainly with the peace process and the form and content of the forthcoming ninth round, as well as the question of the Palestinian deportees stranded in Marj al-Zuhur.

When asked why he was speaking very cautiously about the outcome of his visit to Washington, al-Husayni said: I do not want to talk about the outcome. I prefer to say that there are signs which need thorough and precise consideration, and we need to know more details. Only then can we talk publicly, whether positively or negatively.

He added that contacts with U.S. officials have not ceased. If diplomatic channels are not enough, then we will go back to Washington if necessary.

Al-Husayni went on to say: Yitzhaq Rabin has either created new obstacles or nurtured the ones left by Shamir. If Rabin wants negotiations to take their proper course, then he must simply remove these obstacles.

Asked whether the violence in the West Bank and Gaza Strip is aimed at strengthening the negotiating position of the two sides, al-Husayni said: After the deportations and the escalation of Israeli violence, we said that Rabin is mistaken if he thinks that we have only one choice—engaging in the talks. We now say that we have other choices. Negotiation must be the choice of the Palestinians and Israelis.

Al-Husayni added: If Rabin thinks that he can choose all methods and that we are forced to negotiate, then he is also mistaken. I think that what is happening in our Palestinian territories bears this out.

Asked whether the Arab states can participate in the negotiations without the Palestinians, al-Husayni said: There is growing Palestinian-Arab coordination. The foreign ministers have agreed to make a collective decision: We either all go or we all boycott the talks.

Regarding information about a U.S. promise to secure the return of all the deportees by August, he said: There are no details on this issue.

Al-Husayni, Dr. Hanan 'Ashrawi, and Dr. Nabil Qassis will return to Jerusalem today via the King Husayn Bridge.

Hamas Claims Killing of Israeli Border Guard

NC2903202893 Paris AFP in English 2005 GMT 29 Mar 93

[Text] Amman, March 29 (AFP) - The Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, on Monday [29 March] claimed responsibility for the weekend killing of an Israeli border guard in the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

In a statement from the Jordanian capital, Hamas said "that a member of Martyr 'Abdallah 'Azzam's Commando Group, the armed wing of Hamas in the West Bank, opened fire Saturday on a Jewish military jeep in a main street of Tulkarm, killing one of the border guards."

The attack was part of the "escalation of the jihad (holy war) against Jews, enemies of God who soil our land and our sacred places," the statement added.

The Israeli Army said that a border guard was killed by an assailant who fired an Israeli-made Uzi submachine gun at a military jeep in Tulkarm. The assailant then fled.

Hamas has already claimed responsibility for killing two Israeli soldiers a week ago.

'Differences' Between Deportees Noted

NC2603221293 London MBC Television in Arabic 2100 GMT 26 Mar 93

[Text] Differences have again arisen among the Palestinian deportees leaders over the issue of their representation. The differences surfaced as 100 days have passed since their deportation. Shaykh 'Abdallah al-Shami, leader of the Islamic Jihad Movement, has accused the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, of exercising ideological terrorism against his supporters. He said that

our brothers, foremost of whom is al-Rantisi, do not want our voice to be heard nor our distinguished position to be clarified.

Al-Rantisi, however, denied the accusations, saying that al-Shami's statement is only a personal view.

Habash on PFLP Congress, Peace Process

PM2903142193 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 19 Mar 93 p 5

[Interview with Dr. George Habash, secretary general of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, by Mahir 'Uthman; date and place not given]

[Text] ['Uthman] It has been a long time since your previous congress. In what kind of atmosphere was this congress held, in relation to internal affairs and developments affecting the Palestinian cause?

[Habash] First of all I would like to thank your paper for taking the initiative and deciding to find out about the Front [Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—PFLP] and its fifth congress from sources of the Front itself so that what it publishes would be a reflection of the truth as it is, no more and no less. Since we began making preparations for our fifth national congress, we realized that it was not going to be a ceremonial congress held as part of our routine internal partisan life (...) We were also aware of the crucial circumstances through which our national cause was passing. We therefore maintained the link between our national cause and its circumstances and our own internal situation.

Our Palestinian cause is now going through the most serious phase in the history of our Palestinian national struggle. We in the PFLP call it the phase of the Zionist enemy's attempts to liquidate the cause with the approval of the U.S. Administration and on the basis of adverse Arab and international circumstances. We realize that the balance of forces could make the achievement of that goal possible, particularly in view of the position taken by the PLO's official leadership on the settlement (liquidation) plan and the current U.S. solution.

That was the atmosphere in which our congress was held. Concentrating on that equation, and convinced that the PFLP should rise to the challenge, the motto of our congress was "the fifth national congress is a new surge, a hardening of the organizational and struggle structures, a deepening of democracy, a reinforcement of the popular nature of the party, a protection for the intifadah, a continuation of the intifadah on the way to the fulfillment of the Palestinian national program, and a stand against the liquidation and capitulation plans."

I can say that, in my view, the most important decision made by the congress was its acceptance that "the Palestinian national struggle is on the threshold of a new phase" which is beginning to take shape and to crystallize. The congress sought to define it and discern its main features and then define the PFLP's role in dealing with it

['Uthman] You stopped external operations many years ago, but it has now been rumored that in your latest congress you readopted the slogan of "pursuing the enemy everywhere". If that is true, does it mean a return to external operations?

[Habash] Reactions have continued since the conclusion of our fifth national congress. I have watched this with interest. What really drew my attention was the intensive and even exceptional concentration on the question of rehabilitating martyr Wadi' Haddad [a former PFLP hardliner] and linking it to the slogan "pursuing the enemy everywhere." I will here give myself the right to explain the PFLP's position on this matter.

Since its inception the PFLP charted a clear military line based on fighting the enemy inside occupied Palestine and across surrounding Arab borders whenever possible. From that military line it also branched into a tactical line from 1967 to 1972 based on chasing the enemy everywhere he can be reached. The Front followed that line on the basis of its analysis of the circumstances affecting the Palestinian cause at the time. In 1972, at our third national congress, we examined that line and decided that it had exhausted its purpose and that the factors which necessitated it had come to an end. We made a clear decision terminating it. What determines our tactical line at the military level is an objective analysis of the tangible reality. That has been our concept from that date and to this moment..

I want to point out without any hesitation that if we in the PFLP thought that such a tactical line would serve our national cause now, we would not be afraid or ashamed to say so. The fact is that we believe that that line does not fulfill the requirements of the current phase through which our people's struggle is passing.

['Uthman] What was the significance of honoring the late Wadi' Haddad at this stage? Was this an internal organizational gesture or did it have implications linked to the current circumstances in the Middle East?

[Habash] On the question of the rehabilitation of martyr Wadi' Haddad, let me first ask: Who was Wadi' Haddad? In brief, he was a prominent Palestinian leading figure, a model struggler who dedicated his life to a cause he believed in. He was also a man with exceptional brains for planning and tactics. That is how Wadi' Haddad is seen by our Palestinian people and by the fighters and cadres of the Palestinian revolution. He is one on a list which includes Abu-Jihad, Ghassan, Abu-Amal, Abu-al-Walid, and others. Furthermore, we refuse to view martyr Wadi' through the eyes of the circles opposed to our people's cause who saw him as a terrorist or as a wanted person. Hence his rehabilitation by our fifth national congress.

The congress' decision was a purely organizational gesture and should not be seen as anything more than it was. The ranks, cadres, and leadership of the PFLP cannot possibly forget the founding role played by Dr. Wadi' nor the part he played in the early stages of the PFLP's

military struggle. The tactical line pursued by the PFLP at the time, through the activities of Wadi' Haddad and his colleagues, contributed to the achievements which projected our people's true struggle and exposed the terrible injustice inflicted on them through the occupation of their territory and through displacement from their homes into refugee camps and into the diaspora.

So, here we are dealing with purely organizational considerations which have nothing to do with the "pursuing the enemy everywhere" slogan. That rehabilitation does not mean a return to external military operations as some papers claimed.

['Uthman] Although Lenin has already fallen in many countries, particularly in East European countries and the former Soviet Union, his statue appeared at your congress. Does the PFLP still pursue a Marxist-Leninist line?

[Habash] The theoretical aspect received special attention during the fifth national congress. The theoretical document was one of the first documents on the agenda. I can proudly say that there was a serious dialectical discussion. That explains the congress' decision that we are guided by the historic Marxist dialectical materialism representing a serious spirit and vitality in harmony with life's developments and emerging facts. I can say that, through our fifth national congress' discussions, we upheld the true understanding of Marxism and Leninism, the understanding that theory guides action but not as a rigid dogma. As regards Lenin, we do not idolize individuals but at the same time we deeply respect those who dedicated themselves to the struggle for principles. We still view Lenin as a revolutionary leader and distiguished and prominent internationalist, and also as an exceptional and unique intellect which led the Bolsheviks to victory. We still see in Lenin and what he stood for a number of values and ideals which generate zeal and struggle for the causes of the people, the homeland, and the toiling masses. That, briefly, is our position on the approach and the individuals.

['Uthman] What is the current state of relations between the PFLP's internal and external organizations?

[Habash] The answer to that question is very simple. While realizing the background which probably gives rise to such questions, my answer is that the PFLP inside the homeland and outside is one united organization with the same leadership bodies such as the Political Bureau and the Central Committee. The geographical distribution has no special organizational significance in this connection. For example, the fifth national congress documents were sent, before approval by the congress, to the homeland and our colleagues inside the homeland discussed them and made a record of the views expressed and observations made. Numerous amendments were made on the basis of such observations as well as other observations and details. In other words, this is an integral organizational process based on the unity of the organization and its bodies, documents, and program, and, accordingly, unity of action.

Having established that fact, I must point out that our national congress addressed the very important matter of understanding the significance and ramifications of moving the center of gravity of national action to the interior of the homeland, and the organizational, financial, and military consequences of that.

I can sum up this point as follows: The unity of the Front as an organization at home and abroad is the basis. Add to that the scientific understanding of the nature of the phase through which Palestinian national struggle is passing and understanding of the significance of moving the center of gravity of national action to the homeland.

['Uthman] You are opposed to the current peace negotiations even though you are part of the PLO. In that opposition you are in agreement with other Palestinian factions such as Hamas, despite the major differences between the two as the PFLP is secular while Hamas is fundamentalist. How do you explain that?

[Habash] One can hypothetically say that, at present, there are three main political trends in the Palestinian arena: National bourgeois, secular democratic, and religious fundamentalist. All factions of Palestinian national action coexist within these three trends. They act in accordance with their own class and ideological concept of the conflict with the enemy. We Palestinians are facing a fierce enemy. We can only wrest our rights from that enemy if we are united. The challenge facing us is how to act on a united basis despite our different approaches, political concepts, and class realities.

On that basis, we have defined three central principles for our united national political action:

1. Continuous concern for Palestinian national unity.

2. Preservation of the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and their national entity.

3. Continuous concern for the democratic nature of the relations governing the Palestinian home.

The equation here is complex. On the one hand we see the official bourgeois trend addressing the American plan and departing from the program of national consensus. On the other hand we see manifestations of national action characterized by a decline in the spirit of democracy and a tendency by the fundamentalist trends to impose their views opposed to the U.S. settlement plan. Their position regarding the PLO is also not as clear as it should be, like Hamas, for instance.

So, we are facing a real challenge of having to face political deviation on the one hand and entrenching democratic values of national action on the other, and keeping the Palestinian home united as well, in order to be able to fulfill the program of national concsensus and foil the autonomy plan.

['Uthman] What are your expectations for the current peace process and what are your conditions for its success, that is if you pin any hope at all on it?

[Habash] We pin no hopes on the current settlement process. We, therefore, make no conditions. On the contrary, we seek to foil and abort it. The reason here is clear. We see the proposed settlement as one that does not fulfill our people's legitimate rights, in fact as a settlement that seeks to destroy these rights.

As regards expectations, this is how we read the situation: Numerous parties are trying to ensure the success of this settlement process. They are the U.S. Administration, the Zionist enemy, the [Arab] regimes (...), and the official leadership of the PLO. On the other hand we see the majority of the Palestinian masses and the masses of the intifadah raising the "freedom and independence" slogan. The conflict is now between these two trends and, while aware of the balance of forces, we proceed on the basis that its success is not inevitable. We still request implementation of UN resolutions and intervention by the legitimate organizations. There are many UN resolutions under which we can fulfill our national program calling for self-determination, repatriation, and the establishment of our independent state with Jerusalem as its capital.

Palestinians Upset Over PLO 'Financial Crisis'

NC2603125993 Beirut AL-SAFIR in Arabic 22 Mar 93 p12

[Report by Muna Sukkariyah]

[Text] The PLO's financial crisis is not a secret anymore, nor are the consequences of this crisis, which intensified after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, on the financial aid which the PLO received and the payments it makes to Palestinians in general.

For the first time in many years, the PLO's National Palestinian Fund has failed to pay the salaries of around 3,000 civilian and military employees of the PLO's various organizations in Lebanon. The fund even failed to pay the benefits due to the martyrs' families three months ago. This caused a number of mass Palestinian actions, culminating in strikes and sit-ins. Contacts were held two months ago between the Palestinian leadership in Lebanon and PLO headquarters in Tunisia to tackle the problem and its causes. More recently, the PLO's representatives held a recent meeting in the 'Ayn al-Hulwah camp attended by Shafiq al-Hut, head of the PLO office in Beirut and PLO Executive Committee member. Al-Hut briefed the conferees on the contacts he was holding with the PLO leadership in Tunisia to tackle this issue, especially as the 'Id al-Fitr was approaching.

But there are many questions and increasing concern among the Palestinians residing in Lebanon over the nature of the crisis—whether it is a financial one or a political one.

Some Palestinians are asking if the PLO is really suffering from a financial deficit, which caused all these problems, or if there are policies aimed at gradually "reducing" the PLO's organizational presence until it is completely liquidated. Will this presence be replaced with the expected "autonomy" system if matters proceed along the lines drawn for it?

The worries of Palestinians residing in Lebanon are increasing, nearing the Red Line, particularly as the majority of them are refugees from 1948 who can see that there is no place for them in the "autonomy country." They fear the dangers that a resettlement [in Lebanon] and emigration pose to their fate.

These difficult financial situations prompted a number of Palestinians to assemble yesterday in front of Shafiq al-Hut's house to demand the payment of their salaries which have been halted for several months now.

In reply to a question, al-Hut admitted that there is a financial crisis, adding that it is an acute one. He said he is sorry about the conditions surrounding the Palestinian struggle. He also denounced the stands of some Arab countries that continue to punish the Palestinian people in the name of punishing its leadership.

Regarding reports that he might submit his resignation over the embarrassment caused by the sufferings of Palestinians in Lebanon, al-Hut said: "I am a member of the Executive Committee that was elected by the Palestine National Council and a resignation can only be submitted to this council. I admit that I am suffering a lot because of my responsibility as the PLO representative in Lebanon. I am now between a rock and a hard place. There are our internal problems on one side and the Lebanese government's stand on the other. I am still unable to provide a PLO office in Beirut from which I can make contacts and carry out my duties and responsibilities."

Al-Hut went on to say: "An agreement was reached at the last meeting of the Executive Committee to hold a special meeting to discuss all our internal affairs, including the financial crisis and the condition of the PLO in general. I only hope that political events will not prevail at this meeting, as usual, so that we can hold the necessary discussions. Maybe then we can discern the facts of the situation, the nature of the crisis, and the measures that this entails, particularly with regard to ensuring the benefits paid to the martyrs' families. The sons of the revolution have given their lives and blood and have priority over everything else."

If this does not happen, al-Hut said: "We will have to wait and see. I will think about resigning my responsibility as the PLO's representative in Lebanon."

Algeria

Killings, Arson, 'Terrorist' Arrests Reported

Police Officer Murdered

LD2803231593 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 2200 GMT 28 Mar 93

[Text] Concerning security affairs, a terrorist group comprising three or four persons yesterday murdered a police officer named Bousbaa Assour and his uncle Mneimich Bouzeid. The two victims, who were attending a funeral of one of their relatives, were in an apartment in the Boumaaza quarter of Hussein Dey. The terrorists stormed the apartment and opened fire on the two victims.

The terrorist operation also resulted in the wounding of a brother of Police Officer Bousbaa Attar, who is an officer in the National People's Army.

The National Gendarmerie command also stated that six terrorists were detained at Boumerdes province last week. These were the persons who carried out attacks on five citizens at the Elkarrouch quarter in Reghaya.

The same source said that at 1800 on 26 March three armed men infiltrated the headquarters of the water company at Belrikki and stole radio communications apparatus.

On the night of 27 March, six persons set fire to the offices and files of the general directorate of the foodstuffs distribution company in Tipaza, west of the capital.

The National Gendarmerie command also reported that the body of a terrorist has been found in the area lying between Djemila and Texenna in Jijel province. This matter is connected with the person named Bouassem, the search for whom has been going on for a week.

The same source pointed out that the National Gendarmerie services have not identified the body of a terrorist who died on 22 March in the act of aggression carried out by around 10 terrorists on a patrol of National Gendarmerie men in a forest near the Oued Moussa bridge between Djemila and Texenna in Jijel province.

The source also announced the death of Sergeant Major Fasih Mohamed yesterday, Saturday, as the result of the wounds which he sustained in an attack carried out by around 12 terrorists on a patrol of National Gendarmerie men on 21 March in Sidi Ali Bouneb forest in Tizi Ouzou province.

In Oran, the criminal court of Oran province is expected to look into the charges leveled against some 50 persons implicated in many cases, including two cases of premeditated murder, and other cases involving rape, detention, the formation of a criminal group, theft, and the possession of weapons.

Soldier Killed in El Harrach

LD2503191893 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in French 1800 GMT 25 Mar 93

[Text] A soldier was murdered yesterday in Benzerga, in the sub-prefecture of El Harrach [Algiers suburb]. According to the gendarmerie, the victim, an aeronautical technician, was murdered in front of his house by three armed people who then fled. It has been added that a passer-by who wanted to help him was wounded.

Pre-Ramadan Curfew Imposed Again in Cities

LD2603125393 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1130 GMT 26 Mar 93

[Text] The curfew hours are back to what they were before the month of Ramadan. The Ministry of Interior and Local Communities reminds the citizens that following the end of Ramadan, the curfew hours in force in the provinces of Algiers, Boumerdes, Blida, Tipaza, Ain Defla, and Bouira are from 2230 to 0500 in the morning.

Oran Court Sentences Conspirators, Terrorists

LD2903203293 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 29 Mar 93

[Text] The Oran special court has today issued sentences against two groups charged with conspiracy against state security, setting up a terrorist network, and trading in weapons. The deliberations lasted two days. Radio correspondent Houari Hassan gives us this report on the sentences:

[Hassan] A sentence of 10 years in jail and a 10,000 Algerian dinar fine was passed on the first group, composed of eight elements, which is charged with conspiracy against state authority, andand setting up an armed terrorist group. This sentence was passed in accordance with article 10 of the anti-terrorism law 92/3.

The sentences passed on the second group, which numbers 14, ranged from three to 18 months in jail and a 10,000 dinar fine. On the other hand, the court acquitted Benabdellah Mohamed and passed a one-year suspended sentence on Rouane Mohamed.

The court issued life sentences in absentia against two men who are still at large, Saadoun Ahmed and Oueddane. The court also requested seizure of weapons and imposed legal costs.

EC Delegation Visits To Discuss Cooperation

Members, NCC Meet

LD2903212793 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 29 Mar 93

[Text] A number of questions concerning Algerian-European cooperation were reviewed today during talks between members of the EC parliamentary group and some members of the National Consultative Council

[NCC], including the issues of Algerian debts, emigration, and cooperation and security in the Mediterranean basin. Samia Assi reports from Djenane El-Mithak:

[Assi] At its meeting with some members of the National Consultative Council, the European parliamentary delegation wanted to know more about the current situation in Algeria. The European delegation, led by Claude Cheysson, raised a number of issues. The issue of debts was the most important, particularly since Cheysson said that applying the Mexican way to get rid of debts might be appropriate for Algeria. For members of the National Consultative Council that issue is linked to economic reforms.

The two sides also talked about a dialogue for Maghreban-European peace and cooperation, as well as security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region.

For your information, members of the European delegation also wanted to know more about the National Consultative Council and its tasks.

Foreign Minister Receives Group

LD2903211993 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 29 Mar 93

[Text] Redha Malek, member of the Higher State Council and foreign minister, received Claude Cheysson, head of the European parliamentary delegation in charge of relations with the Arab Maghreb states, at the Foreign Ministry today. Cheysson was accompanied by eight members of the European parliament of various nationalities.

Redha Malek and Claude Cheysson exchanged views on the prevailing political situation in the region and prospects of cooperation between the European Community and the Arab Maghreb Union.

Ali Kafi Meets Delegation Head

LD2903205993 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 29 Mar 93

[Excerpts] Higher State Council Chairman Ali Kafi today received Claude Cheysson, head of the European parliamentary group in charge of relations with the Arab Maghreb states, at the presidential office. [passage omitted]

In a statement after the meeting, Claude Cheysson said Ali Kafi expressed his wish that the work of the [European] parliamentary delegation will be useful and fruitful.

The climax of Claude Cheysson's visit will be a news conference during which he will deal with economic and political relations between Algeria and the European Community.

European Bank Loans 200 Million ECU's for Pipeline

LD2603212293 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in French 0600 GMT 26 Mar 93

[Excerpt] The European Investment Bank has granted a loan of 200 million ECUs for the completion of the trans-Mediterranean gas pipeline, a credit intended to double the capacity of the Algeria-Italy gas pipeline. [passage omitted]

Egypt

'Arafat Holds News Conference on Peace Talks

NC2903162293 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1430 GMT 29 Mar 93

[Text] Cairo, 29 Mar (MENA)—Palestinian president Yasir 'Arafat held a news conference at the Foreign Ministry at noon today. Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa attended.

At the outset of the news conference, Musa welcomed the Palestinian president. He said that today's talks dealt with the same topics that were discussed with President Husni Mubarak yesterday prior to the president's important tour, scheduled to begin tomorrow.

Musa reiterated that peace is passing through a delicate stage, expressing hope that the peace negotiations will resume and that all the existing obstacles will be eliminated so that a just, peaceful settlement can be attained.

'Arafat then read out a statement during the news conference, saying: Today we are passing through a historic turning point. Either we all seize the opportunity and achieve a just and balanced peace, or we become involved in a bitter conflict which would reflect adversely on the security of the region and the world. This conflict also would increase suffering, tragedy, and cycles of violence, which have been causing suffering for all the combatant parties for generations.

'Arafat added: The historical and national responsibility shouldered by the leadership of the Palestinian people, who are struggling for freedom and independence, prompts me at this dangerous crossroads and in view of the current threats to the peace process and the possibilities of its collapse to reiterate that the PLO is prepared to wage the true, great challenge, the challenge of peace. He added that the PLO calls on everyone without exception, particularly the Israeli leadership, to adopt a stand similar to that of the PLO to protect our peoples and to ensure a just solution that will stand fast and enable future generations to enjoy life under its canopy.

The Palestinian president said: The peace option was and still is our strategic option, and despite the tragedy of our people and despite the killings, deportations, persecution, and displacement, our determination to cling to the chance for peace has not weakened or been shaken.

In his statement, 'Arafat said that the sons and daughters of Gaza, the men and women of Jerusalem and the West Bank, and all the sons of these people, who are struggling in and outside their homeland, have supported the Palestinian peace initiative and the resolutions and policy of their sole legitimate leadership, the PLO, through its legislative and executive bodies so that peace can be established in the land of peace.

'Arafat added: I hereby reiterate that we must face with responsibility and far-sightedness all challenges and obstacles that are placed on the road to peace. From this perspective and far from any narrow and short-term calculations, we tell the Israeli leadership and the Israeli public that the moment has come for the human mind and conscience to dominate so that equal relations based on the principles of justice, human rights, and international law can prevail. The Palestinian hand of peace is extended with confidence and a sincere desire for building a just future free of violence, aggression, and oppression, 'Arafat added.

In his statement, 'Arafat emphasized that deportations do not lead to peace, nor do repression, violation of human rights, or continued occupation. He noted that the negotiations are experiencing problems and obstacles and reflect varying emotions, and that the Palestinian leadership has a sense of responsibility and realizes that the peace challenge is more difficult and fierce than the challenge of war. He said: We affirm to the sons and champions of the intifadah that what we aim for is the realization of our people's rights and an honorable, just, durable, and comprehensive peace based on Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, the principle of land for peace, and the recognition of the Palestinian people's rights, including holy Jerusalem, within the framework of the negotiations process and the peace process including the bilateral and multilateral talks, launched in Madrid in October 1991.

He added: The Palestinian people participated in the political talks prompted by a serious desire to reach peace despite the unfair conditions we have accepted. From the beginning, we announced our willingness to engage in the peace talks to agree on a comprehensive framework to resolve the issue and initiate transitional measures in the occupied territories leading to a final, just, and honorable settlement during a set period of time. If the negotiations process has broken down, this is because the proposals received by the Palestinian delegation have lacked a minimal level of balance and because the deportation and repression policy have reached the point to which our people's interests and basic rights are threatened.

'Arafat stressed: The international community today bears witness to the steadfast Palestinian people's continuous and daily suffering. The international community is obligated to support our peaceful efforts within the context of the negotiations that have witnessed eight rounds of arduous work and reached a deadlock, from which no one gains. We are at the threshold of a new phase of international and regional changes and developments.

He said: We have accepted the option of peace after the Palestinian people, through a deliberate decision which expressed their true feelings, voiced their desire for a final and just settlement that will guarantee their rights through peace and coexistence, not war and confrontation. Our people have expressed their desire to end violence and bloodshed in hopes of a secure future that guarantees development, progress, and further prosperity for the people in a democracy that safeguards man's rights and security.

'Arafat concluded his statement by saying: We are eager to coordinate with our brothers in Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and other Arab countries. We are confident that they are committed to a comprehensive solution to all the region's issues, the core of which is the Palestinian cause. Without an honorable, just, and lasting solution to the Palestinian issue, there can be no peace or security in the Middle East. We are certain that any progress made in the peace process is a gain for all of us. Therefore, the Palestinian people, represented by the PLO, will not hesitate to shoulder their full responsibility in establishing this just and lasting peace.

'Arafat began his news conference with a statement emphasizing the PLO's faith in the pioneering role played by sisterly Egypt in safeguarding pan-Arab security. He said he thought it necessary to meet President Mubarak before the start of his European tour tomorrow and before he meets U.S. President Clinton and members of the U.S. Congress. Pointing out that President Mubarak will travel to Europe and the United States carrying the causes and concerns of his Arab nation, 'Arafat said he thought it necessary to reaffirm the PLO's position and its belief in the need to establish peace and find a comprehensive and just solution to the Palestinian issue.

After delivering his statement, 'Arafat answered reporters' questions. Asked if an agreement has been reached between U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Faysal al-Husayni to secure the return of the deportees by the end of August, 'Arafat said no such agreement has been reached. He also stressed the need to work toward eliminating the obstacles to peace. He added: We attach particular importance to President Mubarak's trip, so that the obstacles to the peace march might be removed.

On the deportees, he stated the need for Israel to renounce the policy of expulsion, which is against the Fourth Geneva Convention. He said the invitations to the peace talks stated that the parties should not undertake any provocative action against each other.

On the U.S.-Palestinian dialogue, 'Arafat said the Palestinians received official promises that the dialogue would resume after the U.S. elections. Unfortunately, he said, this has not happened. He hoped the new U.S. Administration would reconsider the Palestinian-U.S.

dialogue so that there would be no bias in favor of one party at the expense of another.

'Arafat Concludes Visit, Departs

NC3003111493 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1056 GMT 30 Mar 93

[Text] Cairo, 30 Mar (MENA)—Palestinian president Yasir 'Arafat left Cairo this afternoon following a two-day visit, during which he held talks with President Husni Mubarak.

The talks focused on the Middle East peace process and contacts to overcome the obstacles impeding its progress, primarily the issue of the Palestinian deportees.

Mubarak Meets With Officials; Tour Discussed

NC2903163793 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1427 GMT 29 Mar 93

[Text] Cairo, 29 Mar (MENA)—Following President Husni Mubarak's meeting with the political group today, Information Minister Safwat al-Sharif said the delegates previewed the issues to be discussed during President Mubarak's tour of Germany, Britain, and the United States, which is due to begin tomorrow, Tuesday.

He said the president discussed working papers submitted by the government covering several political and economic issues and technical and technological cooperation with these countries.

Al-Sharif said that on the political level, the president reviewed many Arab and regional issues to be covered during his meetings with political leaders in the countries he will visit. The president reviewed his talks with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad, his recent contacts with Palestinian president Yasir 'Arafat, and contacts held with the Israeli prime minister to remove obstacles blocking and affecting the peace negotiations.

He said the delegates also discussed several other regional and international issues and Egypt's policy on them, as well as economic issues to be raised with governments and economic institutions with a view to backing Egyptian economic policies.

He said they discussed industrial and agricultural ventures and investment involving the Egyptian Government and the countries Mubarak will visit. They also discussed the aid extended to Egypt to fund development and technical projects and projects concerning training and technical and technological cooperation between Egypt and Germany and Egypt and the United States in particular.

Al-Sharif said the president reviewed a report on Egypt's economic policy. Dr. Sidqi submitted a report on his talks with the IMF, an accord reached with the World Bank, and the negotiations with the IMF that are due to start on Saturday.

The information minister said the president reviewed discussions with the IMF on government measures on liberalizing foreign trade and its plan to lower the budget deficit in light of difficult circumstances in the tourist industry and the burden on the budget caused by extra efforts to deal with the effects of earthquakes.

Concluding, al-Sharif said the president listened to a report from the government on its plan to develop the public business sector and measures to sell several companies as part of the privatization policy.

Musa Says Mubarak To Discuss Peace on Tour

NC2903142493 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1120 GMT 29 Mar 93

[Text] Cairo, 29 Mar (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has stated that the talks President Husni Mubarak will hold during his tour of Germany, Britain, and the United States will deal with Egypt's position on the peace process. He said the broad lines of the Egyptian position are well known: It calls for removing all obstacles facing the Middle East peace process. In a statement to reporters today, he said there is a need for a genuine negotiating process to start in which the parties should put forward negotiable stances. He pointed out that negotiations for the sake of negotiations may suit temporarily in certain circumstances, but will not really serve the Middle East. He said the peace process should be based on serious negotiations within a reasonable time framework and quickly arrive at positive conclusions. He said this goal can be achieved only if Israel puts forward clear proposals within the context of full autonomy for the Palestinians.

Musa emphasized the need for Israel to show readiness for a complete withdrawal from the Golan and for the implementation of Security Council Resolution 425 on Lebanon so as to settle the situation with both countries, whereby a final settlement can be worked out outlining the commitments of both parties. He said there are obligations to be fulfilled by both parties within the context of peace or a Middle East solution. He noted that these topics were recently discussed by President Husni Mubarak, Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad, and Palestinian president Yasir 'Arafat, at Damascus meetings, and during Egypt's contacts with Israel and the United States. He said the contacts were intended to prepare the ground for President Mubarak's talks with U.S. President Bill Clinton, British Prime Minister John Major, and German Chancellor Helmut Kohl. He said there are other aspects to the tension in the Middle East, which must be discussed to clear the atmosphere, which is not conducive to a comprehensive peace in the region.

Asked about a European role in the peace process, Musa said the European framework differs from that of the United States because of Europe's proximity to the Middle East and its longstanding ties with it. He said Europe has visible international weight, an advanced economy, and plans that can be implemented if peace is established. He said Europe plays a role in backing the

peace process, in the issue of guarantees, and in envisioning a new Middle East in which a fair peace prevails. Europe, he added, has a significant role to play in removing the obstacles to the peace process, such as the deportees issue and the treatment of the population of the occupied territories and the settlements.

Asked about the U.S. role, especially after the signing of the strategic cooperation agreement with Israel, Musa said that for the U.S. role to be effective in the establishment of fair peace, the United States should be a neutral mediator, have balanced ties with both parties, and support the peace process fairly. This situation exists, he said, adding that there must be a balance and that the principle of land for peace should be respected—all land for complete peace, he maintained, because any peace process that is without balance and fairness between the rights and obligations of all parties will not be an effective peace process. He said there are numerous issues to be discussed in addition to bilateral ties between Egypt and the three countries. These issues include Bosnia-Herzegovina, Africa, and the Third World.

Asked about terrorism in Egypt, Musa said Egypt's stance against all forms of terrorism is unequivocal. On plots against stability in the Arab world and slander that Islam allows such crimes, he said we have a major duty to clear Islam of these crimes, which, regrettably, occur in its name. He said Islam is a religion of tolerance, education, progress, coexistence, worship, and good treatment. He noted that Islam has been slurred because of ignorant terrorism. He pointed to a responsibility to eliminate these slurs, adding that this has nothing to do with President Mubarak's visit. He said that every Arab and Islamic country should try to save Islam from the image that a minority is trying to portray persistently and ignorantly. He said: We are trying to defend Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina, while a Muslim kills his brother Muslim on the streets of Arab and Islamic cities. This is unacceptable and we, along with all Muslims, reject it. Concluding his statement, Musa said developments in Somalia are positive, that progress has been made in the reconciliation conference, and that there has been agreement on establishing a provisional government. He noted that the United Nations is mobilizing peacekeeping forces to supervise the next stage, which is not bad.

Information Minister Discusses Current Issues

NC2603202093 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1740 GMT 26 Mar 93

[Text] Paris, 26 Mar (MENA)—Information Minister Safwat al-Sharif has said that during his upcoming visit to the United States, President Husni Mubarak will discuss with U.S. President Bill Clinton several international and Arab issues, including Somalia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, the peace talks, and President Mubarak's proposal for a nuclear nonproliferation treaty in the Middle East.

He noted that there are other issues on the agenda, particularly the peace issue, which is central for us, and Israel's position on the deportees. The president will also discuss Gulf security and African issues.

In an interview with the Paris-based AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI magazine today, the information minister said the talks will also deal with Egyptian-U.S. cooperation and ways to strengthen bilateral cultural, technical, military, and economic cooperation.

Regarding the possibility of convening an Arab summit, al-Sharif said Mubarak has an Arab point of view, which is that unless careful preparation is made for such a summit and at least three-quarters of the topics on the agenda are agreed upon, it might lead to contradictory results and holding it would be senseless. He added: As President Mubarak has said, I do not think current conditions would allow us to hold an urgent summit.

Asked about reports that the Damascus Declaration will not see the light, he said that this is not true, adding that President Mubarak has confirmed that Kuwaiti officials have asked Egypt to undertake its role in implementing the Damascus Declaration. At the same time, he said, the Kuwaiti National Assembly speaker made contradictory statements. Egypt is fulfilling its role in establishing Arab national security regardless of the name under which it does it. The principal name is the Arab League's Joint Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreement. President Mubarak clearly said: We are not waiting for a name or an umbrella called the Damascus Declaration to respond to the request of any Arab state for support. However, no one has read an official or unofficial statement by any Gulf state that it rejects the Declaration. The lack of decisiveness in adopting measures to implement it is, of course, another matter. The declaration is suffering as a result of indecisiveness in implementing it.

Al-Sharif confirmed that the situation in Egypt is more reassuring today than at any time before. He said terrorism is an international phenomena and is not confined to Egypt. It is present in Europe and America. What is happening in Egypt is small compared to what is happening, for example, in India or London.

He said tourism in London was affected. What is happening in London was the result of unemployment and the recession in England. He added that compared to these countries Egypt's problems are negligible. However, the foreign press does not look farther than its nose. Were it objective, it would have found terrorism, violence, and bloodshed everywhere.

In the interview, al-Sharif criticized some foreign reporters who do not assess developments objectively, who do not know the facts, and tarnish Islam's image by focusing on terrorism and fundamentalists. Regrettably, he said, some foreign reporters listen to anyone who sends them faxes and make an issue of such messages in Western newspapers. He added that such journalists continue their reporting in an attempt to defame Islam.

He added that Egyptians do not use the term fundamentalists; this term is used by others to attract attention. He said: We deeply regret their lack of vision, and I urge them to gain a knowledge of the facts and rectify many of their concepts. He noted that the information offices abroad carry out their role and affirmed that the Egyptian media do not hide facts and give foreign journalists a true opportunity to cover developments.

Al-Sharif emphasized that the government in Egypt is based on democracy and multiparty system; therefore, there is no need for underground clandestine action. He said President Mubarak began his rule by releasing prisoners and opening the door to freedom, democracy, and national dialogue.

He said: We held dialogues whenever we had national forces to talk to. However, we reject the attempt by these forces, directed from abroad, to harm Egypt's economy and policy.

He said there is room for the exchange of views and counter views in the People's Assembly and that the door is open for the opposition press to tackle all issues of the society with complete freedom and the public can read and hear them. He added: We enjoy a conscious media freedom, do not censor any journalist, and are happy about the [word indistinct] of democracy of anything takes place openly.

He noted that the media in Egypt have played an important role in exposing terrorism and extremists who hide behind religion. He said these extremists are hostile to Islam and do not represent the true Islam, added that the state and the media are working to enhance a genuine religiousness.

Al-Sharif denied that economic problems are the reason for the youth's affiliation with extremist groups, noting that most of them belong to an uneducated vocational class and that their income is higher than employees. He pointed out that this issue has other dimensions: The unplanned slum quarters are fertile ground for terrorists, who infiltrate these communities through the provision of financial aid, medical treatment, and simple social services for the poor. The terrorists then show their teeth, dominate, force people to pay protection money, and use religion to control these communities and prevent wedding and other celebrations.

Al-Sharif said anyone who talks about extremists in Egypt must realize that they are very small in number and that not every unemployed person is a killer. He emphasized that the Egyptian youth are alright and the economic situation is better now than it was five years ago. He noted that wearing the veil has nothing to do with terrorism or extremism, stressing that women have the right to choose. He said women have become a working force and work outside their homes but maintain their conservative attitude.

Al-Sharif said the Egyptian media is confronting terrorism and advocating that Egyptians be international in their thinking rather than provincial, closed in a small society and preoccupied with religion and extremism. The Egyptian media offer a broad scope of concepts and views in today's modern satellite society. There are several channels on Egyptian television featuring various cultures. He noted that the revolution in the Egyptian media promotes democracy, which will decimate terrorism. He stressed that darkness allows extremism and terrorism to emerge.

Mubarak Departs for European, U.S. Tour

NC3003072993 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0626 GMT 30 Mar 93

[Excerpt] Cairo, 30 Mar (MENA)—President Muhammad Husni Mubarak left Cairo for Bonn this morning at the beginning of a week-long tour of Germany, Britain, and the United States.

Accompanying him on his tour is an official delegation comprising Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa; Information Minister Safwat al-Sharif; Dr. 'Atif 'Ubayd, minister for cabinet affairs and minister of state for administrative development; Dr. Zakariya 'Azmi, director of the Presidential Secretariat; and Dr. Usamah al-Baz, director of the President's Office for Political Affairs. [passage omitted]

Mubarak Interview on Iran, Peace Process Reported

NC3003131793 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1205 GMT 30 Mar 93

[Text] London, 30 Mar (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak has accused the Iranian regime of trying to shake stability in Egypt by financing the terrorists who perpetrated recent explosions in Egypt.

In an interview with the British newspaper the FINANCIAL TIMES, published today, President Mubarak said that Iran is certainly behind the wave of extremism.

Alluding to the Arab-Israeli peace negotiations, President Mubarak said Israel must take certain actions so that the negotiations will be resumed in Washington, as scheduled, on 20 April. President Mubarak cautioned that time is passing, stressing that Egypt wishes to help all parties. He said that Egypt is currently trying to resolve the Palestinian deportees issue.

President Mubarak said that the 20 April meeting could be the last chance to resolve the Middle East problem, adding: We must not miss this chance.

President Mubarak said that his contacts with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin will help bring the participating sides to the negotiations table, noting that he intends to contact Rabin upon his return from the United States.

In his interview, President Mubarak stressed that the U.S. Administration must be a full partner in the Middle

East peace process, not only by pressuring Israel, but also by mediating and helping in other ways. President Mubarak also stressed the need for the United States to continue its good contacts with Israel to advance the peace process in the region.

President Mubarak warned Arab governments not to react emotionally to Israel's recent statements concerning strategic cooperation with the United States. He said that there is nothing new in these statements because there is already cooperation between Israel and the United States in various fields. He said that he has asked the Arab governments not to be concerned over these statements.

Touching on U.S. aid to Egypt, President Mubarak said he expects U.S. aid to Egypt will not be less than U.S. aid to Israel, or U.S. $3 billion.

President Mubarak warned against partitioning Iraq, noting that we will all suffer, including Europe, in the future if Iraq is partitioned. President Mubarak said that the world might not feel the danger now, but when Iraq becomes three states, each one of them will create problems in the region.

President Mubarak said he will discuss with President Clinton the situation in Iraq and the means to help the Iraqi people.

Commentary Renews Attack on Iranian Leaders

NC2903205393 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1845 GMT 29 Mar 93

[Ahmad al-Qasir commentary: "How Many Crimes Are Committed in the Name of Islam Today?"]

[Text] How long will the gang that rules in Tehran, which tarnished the face of Islam and Muslims and brought disaster upon them everywhere, continue to bluff? Those liars have come up with a new heresy, which the world has uncovered. They called it the Islamic revolution in an attempt to hide the face of this terrorist regime, which has no concern but to export terrorism and crime and terrify Muslims everywhere.

The best evidence of what we say is that no Islamic country has escaped these people's woes, whether in the Arab Maghreb or in the Arab east. This dictatorial regime, which tries to hide behind the cloak of religion, was not ashamed to squander the oppressed Iranian people's wealth. The regime spent it on global terrorist gangs and on establishing camps to train them in return for bribes they pay to the countries that agree to have their territory used as assembly points for these criminals from which to take off and infiltrate neighboring countries to carry out sabotage and killing, cause panic, and shake security and stability. What is this Islam of which Iranian rulers speak? Does Islam call for terrorism, bloodshed, and dividing Muslims everywhere? Is it an Islamic deed that these ayatollahs should quell Iran's Muslim people and plunder their wealth to squander it on their military adventures in the name of the Islamic revolution?

Do the Arabs and Muslims forget what those rulers did in south Lebanon and that they caused its destruction and division and the occupation of part of it by Israel? Is it an Islamic deed that Iran should carry out aggression against the United Arab Emirates and occupy its land by force? Even Muslim Turkey has not escaped their harm. Turkish officials announced that Tehran's rulers are responsible for recent terrorist acts and explosions in eastern Turkey; their agents confessed to that.

Even the Palestinian people who struggle to get rid of the Israeli occupation have not escaped the evil of these crooks—the direct cause of the Palestinian people's division and of splitting the Palestinian fold. This prompted Palestinian president Yasir 'Arafat to accuse them publicly a few weeks ago, urging them to stop meddling in Palestinian people's affairs.

Has this anything to do with Islam? Are these rulers keen to protect Islam and Muslims? What have the ayatollahs done about the massacres and famines suffered by our Muslim brothers in Somalia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and southeast Asia?

Where, then, is the Islamic revolution the slogans of which they are raising? It is merely a type of political thuggery and military bullying, not only against the peoples of the Gulf region, but against all the peoples of the Arab nation, with the aim of imposing hegemony and fulfilling the old Persian dream of establishing an empire at the Arabs' expense. The behavior of these adventurers has not risen to the level of civilized ruling systems. There are no ethics, principles, or commitments. They do not act as statesmen, but follow the gangsters' barbaric method of obscenity, abuse, and attacks against anyone who Tehran's rulers believe poses them a danger or blocks their criminal schemes everywhere.

It is not revolutionary to adopt terrorism as a policy to rule the Iranian people and to attempt to unfairly impose hegemony and guardianship on Muslims. It is not revolutionary, O rulers of Tehran, to shed blood, kill people, steal and rob, or occupy others' territory by force. This unethical behavior is far removed from the principles of our tolerant religion, which preaches peace, love, and brotherhood and rejects scaring innocent people anywhere, even if they are not Muslims.

How long will Tehran's rulers continue to deceive themselves? Who has given them the right to impose their guardianship on Muslims? If they are really Muslims, they should have the fear of God when it comes to their religion and people, not these criminal and reckless actions.

Do Tehran's rulers forget that they have dealt with Israel for many years and imported weapons and equipment from it through a third country and then declared their

rejection of the peace efforts and determination to liberate Jerusalem from Israel?

This is a painful tragedy these charlatans have inflicted on the Muslims. These charlatans vent their anger today on the Egypt of Arabism and Islam, the Egypt of al-Azhar, or the Cairo of the 1,000 minarets the noble people of which know the tenets of tolerant Islam and who defend their country and the rights of Arabs and Muslims everywhere.

What is the reason for this? It is latent black hatred for Egypt, because it is the only Arab Muslim country that can restrain Iran's rulers, the country that has exposed their criminal behavior toward it and all the fraternal Arab peoples, and the country that can defend Arab security anywhere. No wonder Tehran's rulers have lost their nerve and continue their deceitful propaganda campaigns against Egypt's Arab Muslim people and their scheming to destabilize its security and stability.

Shame on you, O rulers of Iran. How many crimes are being committed in the name of Islam today?

Cabinet Discusses Foreign, Domestic Issues

NC3003062693 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 2100 GMT 29 Mar 93

[Text] Foreign and domestic policies were discussed at a cabinet session tonight chaired by Prime Minister Dr. 'Atif Sidqi.

Information Minister Safwat al-Sharif said the cabinet reviewed a report on foreign policy presented by Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa. The report dealt with developments in the peace negotiations; Egypt's Arab and international efforts; the results of the talks President Husni Mubarak held with Presidents Hafiz al-Asad and Yasir 'Arafat; and contacts held to coordinate stands on the obstacles facing the peace process, held before President Mubarak's visit to Germany, Britain, and the United States. The visit begins tomorrow.

The report also discussed the consequences of recent terrorist incidents and their effect on Egypt's image abroad. The report noted that despite the fact that many terrorist actions take place on a larger scale in other countries, some foreign media have analyzed the situation incorrectly and are using the incidents to harm the Egyptian people's unity and cohesion. The report added that foreign media are ignoring the Egyptian people's attitude toward the perpetrators of these incidents.

The information minister added that the foreign minister's report noted that the forces seeking to harm Egypt's unity have united on the following:

1. To damage the peace process so that the region will continue to suffer from conflict and instability;

2. To distract Egypt from its Arab and leading role;

3. To put an end to the progress and development process and abort the economic reform process and results, and;

4. To restrict the tourism and investment development process.

Minister al-Sharif added that the cabinet then reviewed a report by the interior minister on terrorism and on apprehending terrorists, especially now that they have begun targeting all of Egypt's sons, as demonstrated by the incidents in the al-Tahrir and al-'Atabah Squares. The interior minister's report said decisive confrontations have taken place in a number of governorates with trained terrorist leaders. The report said the process of chasing and apprehending terrorists has involved shootings and victims. Terrorists have shot at policemen while the latter were carrying out their duties. The report added that 270 defendants have been arrested and referred to the investigation offices and that extraordinary measures have been taken against 1,500 extremist elements.

The report also noted that the confrontations of the past few weeks have foiled planned terrorist acts and have led to the arrest of a number of terrorists planning armed robberies, all of whom were sought by justice.

The report also mentions the citizens's role of supporting the security forces, chasing terrorists, informing on them, and helping arrest them.

The information minister said the cabinet emphasized that the comprehensive confrontation against terrorism will continue until it is completely uprooted.

The report praised police efforts and sacrifices and emphasized the need to support them when they are performing their duties.

Concluding his statements, the information minister said: In light of its discussions of the security situation, the cabinet made several decisions on political, diplomatic, media, and cultural actions that will be carried out through constant coordination among the ministries involved. The cabinet also followed up the measures taken to improve the standard of living and services in the poorly planned and serviced areas.

Prime Minister Reviews Economic Reform Policy

NC2703152393 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1337 GMT 27 Mar 93

[Text] Cairo, 27 Mar (MENA)—Prime Minister Dr. 'Atif Sidqi has stressed that Egypt is not currently suffering from any shortage in foreign currency. He added that any person could obtain as much foreign currency as he wants, at any time, without any obstacles.

Addressing the Consultative Council today, the prime minister reviewed the government's economic reform policy since 1986. He pointed out that the state's budget deficit, which amounted to between 27 to 28 percent in

the year 1986-87, has gone down to approximately 3.5 percent in 1992-93, will reach 2.5 percent in 1993-94, and will reach 1 percent of the gross national product in 1994-95, provided the economic reform measures continue and government expenditures are cut back. The prime minister noted that monetary remittances are flowing into Egypt in an unprecedented way, thanks to the liberalization of the dollar rate and the exchange rate.

The prime minister said that although the second phase of the sales tax will not cause any real or additional burdens on the public, it will not be introduced this year or next year. He added: It is a Value Added Tax, which is one of the most advanced taxes applicable in advanced states.

On the policy of price liberalization, Sidqi emphasized that the state does not interfere in determining the price of any commodity, except for cotton, whose price will be determined by market forces in October. This policy, he added, has caused the price of approximately 350 previously fixed-price commodities to go up. He noted that this, however, does not mean that the state will not intervene at any time to protect consumers, adding that salaries and wages have been increased 100 percent in five years. He said that the continuation of this policy will cause prices to go down as a result of a decline in the inflation rate.

On reforms in the public sector, the prime minister reviewed the measures adopted by the government and noted that privatization is not a goal in itself; it is simply a method for adjusting the financial structure of public sector companies. He noted that a catalogue on the procedures for assessing and selling the shares of these companies has been prepared. The prime minister stressed that the economic reforms cannot be successful unless they are coupled with administrative reforms, which are more difficult than economic reforms.

Dr. Sidqi noted that a 50 percent drop in tourist arrivals this season is expected as a result of some regrettable incidents carried out by some individuals, which some enemies have exploited. He noted that a sound investment atmosphere must be created regardless of the disturbances caused by some parties, whether out of lack of awareness or ill will.

Background Information on U.S. Bombing Suspect

NC2903185493 Cairo AL-AHRAM in Arabic 25 Mar 93 pp 1, 12

[Text] An AL-AHRAM correspondent has learned that the Egyptian authorities yesterday morning deported Mahmud Abu-Halimah, whom all signs indicate is the mastermind of the World Trade Center bombing in New York. The correspondent further learned that Abu-Halimah had entered Egypt using a German travel document. He is not carrying an Egyptian passport and did not obtain an entry visa to Egypt from the Egyptian Embassy in Washington. The correspondent also learned that Abu-Halimah was carrying with him a U.S. green card, as a U.S. citizen, and for this reason the Egyptian authorities decided to deport him yesterday morning.

According to information received by Egyptian authorities, Iraq is financing many of the terrorist operations conducted under the disguise of religion. The results of the ongoing investigations in Washington and some other world capitals will reveal extremely important facts regarding the terrorist operations. The correspondent has also learned that Abu-Halimah, whom U.S. authorities believe to be one of the planners of the World Trade Center bombing, left New York after the incident for Saudi Arabia and from there arrived in Cairo, where he stayed for a few days before leaving. According to information received by AL-AHRAM, it is not known whether he was handed over to the U.S. authorities or if he left for Germany. If arrested by U.S. authorities, he is expected to be tried immediately in the United States.

Abu-Halimah, who was born in Egypt, holds citizenship in two countries: Germany because he married a German woman, and the United States. His brother Muhammad Abu-Halimah, who lives in New Jersey, has told REUTER that his brother was arrested by Egyptian police on 14 March at his family home in Kafr al-Dawwar city. He added that the Egyptian police held his brother all of last week and arrested his younger brother al-Sayyid, 15, releasing him later. AP has reported that Mahmud Abu-Halimah was arrested in Egypt and was deported to the United States yesterday morning.

Mahmud Abu-Halimah was born in Kafr al-Dawwar in January 1960. He obtained his general secondary school certificate in 1978 and joined Alexandria University's Faculty of Law, but dropped out of college in the first year. He travelled to Germany in 1980 and two years later went to New Jersey, where he worked in a restaurant and then as a taxi driver. He obtained U.S. citizenship and later travelled to Munich, Germany, where he married a German girl and had four children. He travelled frequently between Germany and the United States.

Mahmud Abu-Halimah has four brothers and sisters. His younger brother was recently arrested in New Jersey, where he went five years ago, on suspicion of being involved in the World Trade Center bombing. His brother Sharif works in Canada and his sister is married to an Egyptian engineer who lives in the United States. His youngest brother al-Sayyid is in secondary school in Kafr al-Dawwar. His father, 64, is a pensioner and his mother a housewife.

Some of his neighbors in Kafr al-Dawwar have told AL-AHRAM correspondent Ibrahim al-Bilisi that they learned that Mahmud Abu-Halimah had travelled to Afghanistan and fought in the Afghan mujahedin's war against the communist regime more than five years ago.

Mufti Says Islamic Group Ignorant of Islamic Law

NC2603185193 Paris AFP in English 1800 GMT 26 Mar 93

[Text] Aswan, Egypt, March 26 (AFP) - Egypt's mufti, Shaykh Sayyid Tantawi, has urged Muslim militants to initiate talks with the government, saying the al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah's [Islamic Group] violent campaign reflected the group's ignorance of Islamic law.

The mufti, the highest spiritual authority for Egyptian Muslims, called on the al-Jama'ah to offer alternatives to the laws it considered anti-Islamic through "legal channels, such as the State Council."

"If you (al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah) are in disagreement with the government, discuss the subject and offer your opinion. The government does not forbid it," Shaykh Tantawi said in an interview with AFP.

"We are a Muslim country and this does not prevent us from making mistakes."

The al-Jama'ah are locked in a battle with the authorities to set up a strict Islamic state in Egypt, where around 130 people have been killed, including 60 militants and three tourists, in a year of fundamentalist violence.

Shaykh Tantawi, who underlined "the need to implement Islamic law but in a progressive fashion and through dialogue," described al-Jama'ah members as "our brothers provided they respect this law."

The al-Jama'ah's effort to impose its views by force is "ignorance of Islamic law and deviation from Islam," he said.

The mufti also denounced the planting of bombs on tour buses and assaults on innocent people as "corruption on earth."

Algerian Decision on Ties With Iran, Sudan Viewed

NC2803162993 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1510 GMT 28 Mar 93

["News Analysis" by Ahmad Subhi]

[Text] Algeria's decision to sever its diplomatic relations with Iran and freeze them with Sudan comes as violence, which for several months has been carried out by terrorists hiding behind religion, continues in Algeria. Algeria said the terrorists receive funding and training from Iran and Sudan. The Algerian Higher State Council's decision did not come as a total surprise: Algeria had reduced the staff of its diplomatic mission in Tehran as a warning to Iran not to proceed with its hostile positions.

Algeria's decision involves several noteworthy elements:

1. Severing relations was confined to Iran; Sudan was excluded. The Algerian leaders felt largely disappointed over Iran's ingratitude. Algeria strongly supported Iran's leaders during their war with Iraq. Severing relations was the least action Algeria could take.

2. By considering it sufficient to freeze relations with Sudan, Algeria is trying to give Sudan's rulers a chance to think twice before relations are completely severed. The Algerian leaders took into consideration the fact that Sudan is an Arab country.

3. The Algerian decision is directed against the same two countries that many other countries accuse, explicitly or implicitly, of being behind the terrorist operations on their territories. This strengthens the position of the United States, which placed Iran at the head of the list of the countries supporting terrorism, and warned Sudan against sheltering terrorists.

4. The countries that support terrorism and export it abroad primarily suffer from dictatorship and bad economic conditions. This is why they perpetrate such acts to distract their people's attention from the internal situation.

Columnist: Sudanese 'Hour of Redemption' Has Come

NC3003104793 Cairo AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 26 Mar 93 p 14

["Dividing Lines" column by Samir Rajab]

[Excerpts] Former Sudanese Prime Minister al-Sadiq al-Mahdi harbored innate hatred toward Egypt and the Egyptians. He did not like the integration programs between the two peoples. He falsely claimed that these programs were established for the benefit of one party, which was Egypt, and he ultimately decided to abolish them.

Al-Sadiq al-Mahdi rejected all the advice he was given to calm the situation with Egypt, as relations between the two countries are not easy or conventional, but intertwined on economic, political, social, and psychological levels. The man refused to heed his advisors and persisted in his way. [passage omitted]

Al-Sadiq al-Mahdi finally fell from power because he did not try to understand.

Now the situation in Sudan is almost the same as it was before the downfall of al-Sadiq al-Mahdi. 'Umar al-Bashir, who led the so-called national salvation revolution that overthrew the al-Mahdi government, soon sold himself to Hasan al-Turabi, leader of the National Islamic Front. Hasan al-Turabi, regrettably, is no different from al-Sadiq al-Mahdi in his innate hatred of Egypt. [passage omitted]

Because the great majority of the fraternal Sudanese people are well aware of the special relationship between the two countries, this majority has begun resisting the al-Bashir and al-Turabi regime, particularly after all evidence proved its involvement in certain terrorist

operations that were basically directed against their brothers in Egypt. This majority is currently working with courage, daring, and a firm belief in the need to correct what was corrupted by al-Turabi and al-Bashir. They are assisted by a group inside the Sudanese Council of Ministers that is unhappy with the situation and has decided to confront their adventurous, rancorous, and rumor-mongering colleagues inside the cabinet.

The hour of redemption for the fraternal and dear Sudanese people from deception, corruption, and misguidance has come. God always supports the truth and those who raise its banner everywhere.

U.S., Israeli Steps Toward Palestinians Urged

NC2603215293 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2105 GMT 26 Mar 93

[Text] Cairo, 26 Mar (MENA)—In its Saturday editorial, AL- AHRAM stresses that the escalation of the situation in the occupied Arab territories by both Israelis and Palestinians indicates that the gap is widening between them and that the feeling of mistrust is deepening. The paper says U.S. President Bill Clinton's statement that the ninth round of peace negotiations need to begin on 20 April even without the Palestinians, who threaten to boycott them because of the deportee problem, has increased the Palestinians' tenacity of this boycott. They feel they are confronting a blockade and a biassed U.S. stand toward Israel.

AL-AHRAM says the Palestinians feel they are facing a new type of tampering with international legitimacy because Israel is allowed to avoid fully implementing the resolution on returning the deportees. They also feel they are being unfairly treated due to Washington's refusal to renew the dialogue with them at a time when it opens and increases its channels of cooperation with Israel. They feel bitter about the continued Israel and U.S. insinuation that an agreement may be reached with Syria on the Golan.

Concluding its editorial, AL-AHRAM says the current situation requires both Israel and the United States to take steps to lift the siege of the Palestinians so that they may participate in the negotiations on an equal footing, particularly since Syria clings to a Palestinian solution as an indivisible part of a comprehensive settlement.

Israel's 'Duty' To Protect Palestinians Viewed

NC2803072893 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2140 GMT 27 Mar 93

[Text] Cairo, 27 Mar (MENA)—In its Sunday editorial, AL-AHRAM notes that Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin's admission that March was a bloody month and his emphasis that problems can only be resolved at the negotiating table to end the current confrontation between two religiously, politically, and ethnically different entities (the Israelis and Palestinians) bring him a step closer to recognizing the Palestinians as another nation or ethnic community.

The paper emphasizes that Rabin's admission, which was voiced under the pressure of the current circumstances, does not clear him of the responsibility for protecting this different entity in accordance with international obligations, under which Israel, as an occupying country, is required to fully care for this entity. The paper notes that protecting the Palestinians is a completely separate measure from Israel's claims that it wants to grant the Palestinian entity self-rule according to Israel's own views. Such a measure, the paper adds, must not wait until an agreement on the form and substance of the self-rule is reached.

The paper concludes by saying that it is Israel's duty to protect the Palestinians because they are inhabitants and because under the Geneva Convention, Israel is responsible for those residing on the territory it occupies.

Palestinian Views on Withdrawal From Gaza Assessed

NC2903190693 Cairo AL-AHRAM AL-MASA'I in Arabic 22 Mar 93 p 2

[Editorial: "Illusion of Israeli Withdrawal From Gaza"]

[Text] Whenever the Palestinian intifadah in the occupied Gaza Strip intensifies and Palestinian youngsters and Israeli soldiers are killed, one Israeli minister or another publicly calls for unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza Strip. A month before he went to Washington, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin made a statement in which he voiced the hope that the sea will swallow the Gaza Strip and that he will wake up one morning to find it drowned in the Mediterranean Sea forever. These statements have made many observers look seriously at the possibility that Israel might carry out a unilateral and sudden withdrawal from the Strip, especially as the continuing intifadah in Gaza forced the Israeli prime minister to cut short his recent visit to Washington and return three days early.

But what is the Palestinian view of such a step? There are three Palestinian views on this possible withdrawal. The first was expressed by Dr. Taysir 'Amaruri, vice chairman of the strategic committee of the Palestinian negotiating team. He said he believes Israeli political figures are not serious enough in their statements about withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, because Rabin and Israel's decisionmakers must, despite the pressure of the Strip on Israeli security, use the withdrawal card as a bargaining chip in the negotiations to get something in return, on the West Bank or in relation to the transitional period and the prerogatives of the transitional self-government.

In contrast, some Palestinians believe that Israel is serious about raising the notion of a unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza Strip after the failure of its

barbaric, repressive measures to extinguish the intifadah. The Strip, the children of which ignited the intifadah five years ago, has become a thorn in Israel's side, particularly as these children have grown up and started to use knives and weapons and kill an Israeli soldier or settler every day that the occupation authorities do not impose a curfew. Those who believe this believe that unilateral Israeli withdrawal will be one of the fruits of the intifadah that should be welcomed immediately.

But there is a third view that believes Israel is exasperated by its presence in the Gaza Strip and plans to withdraw, not as one of the fruits of the intifadah, but as a plot to create a split among the Palestinians, especially the Fatah Movement, the largest of the Palestinian resistance organizations, and Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and Islamic al-Jihad. Dr. Haydar 'Abd-al-Shafi, head of the Palestinian negotiating team and a son of the Gaza Strip, has expressed his surprise and voiced his fears over this proposed Israeli action, particularly after Israel and Iran helped Hamas and Islamic al-Jihad grow to become the adversary of the PLO and all its groups, most notably the Fatah Movement.

In view of these three possibilities, we believe that the soundest stance lies in speeding up coordination and agreement between Hamas and the PLO based on Hamas' recognition of the PLO as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. There is an Arab consensus on the PLO's status.

We tend to side with the view that says Israel will not leave the Strip without a price and that its politicians' statements about a unilateral withdrawal are mere trial balloons, a measure that has not yet ripened and that still lacks the conditions for its easy implementation.

Israel, U.S. Blamed for Islamic Extremism

NC2903191493 Cairo AL-AHRAM in Arabic 25 Mar 93 p 8

[From the "Closeup" column by Salamah Ahmad Salamah: "Israel and Terrorism"]

[Text] Discussing violence and terrorism in the region, we must include Israel's active role and its success in feeding the sources of violence and extremism through its oppression, terrorism, and siege in the occupied Arab territories.

Israel's existence, established as it was on the principle of "the ethnic and religious purity of the Jewish state," and Israel's continuous attempts to liquidate the Palestinian people through the polices of transfer, deportation, constant siege, and settlement building gave rise to the extremist Islamic groups' idea of establishing a religious state as the only way to regain lost Arab glory and usurped Arab rights.

The roots of extremist trends among Islamic groups that embrace terrorism in the Arab and Islamic world grew only under the shadow of Arab failure to confront Israel and stop its expansion. They grew out of Israel's overwhelming success—thanks to covert American support some of the time and blatant support most of the time—in imposing its will on the Arab world.

Events in the occupied Arab territories provide the evidence: The growth of the hardline Islamic trend represented by Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] was in proportion with the Israeli oppression and with the failure of the peace efforts—which the PLO joined despite all the concessions it made.

Through the deportees, Rabin applies more pressure on the Palestinians on the pretext that he is punishing the terrorist elements of Hamas. But what was the result?

The situation in the occupied Arab territories exploded and Israeli violence heightened. Israel does not hesitate to use the greatest violence, cause bloodshed, demolish houses, and impose curfews. Rabin went to Washington and met U.S. President Clinton without Clinton finding a way to persuade Israel of the need to solve the deportees problem.

Indeed, it appeared as though the American interpretation of the role of "full partner" was to give Rabin a free hand to pursue oppressive and terrorist policies in the occupied territories while trying to convince the Arab countries and the Palestinians to return to the negotiating table.

The Arab peoples watch this farce as a new item is added to the new strategic alliance between the United States and Israel: fighting terrorism in the Middle East. What terrorism? Terrorism planted by Israel or that on which the United States capitalizes?

Explosion Reported at Pyramids; Bomb Not Confirmed

NC3003141793 Paris AFP in English 1335 GMT 30 Mar 93

[Excerpt] Cairo, March 30 (AFP)—An explosion wounded two people Tuesday [30 March] at the Great Pyramids, the country's biggest tourist draw, as President Husni Mubarak set off on a foreign tour.

The blast at the foot of Chephren's pyramid injured two maintenance workers but no tourists were hurt, although a party of Russian holidaymakers was at the scene, police said.

Although there was no immediate confirmation the blast was caused by a bomb, the incident was a fresh blow to the tourist industry which has been crippled by a wave of attacks by Muslim militants. [passage omitted]

Minister on 'External Dimensions' of Terrorism

NC3003163893 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1452 GMT 30 Mar 93

[Text] Cairo, 30 Mar (MENA)—Interior Minister Muhammad 'Abd-al-Halim Musa has said that in confronting terrorism in Egypt we cannot ignore the external dimensions of this issue represented in the rise of extremist religious activities abroad and increasing centers in the United States, Western Europe, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and other countries. In a statement he made before the Consultative Council today during a discussion of the issue of terrorism, Musa said that this confrontation should not ignore the growing phenomenon of religious extremism and terrorism in several Arab countries, particularly Algeria, Tunisia, Jordan, and Sudan. He noted that this phenomenon is growing simultaneously in a manner that is almost the same and only differs in certain details.

Musa pointed out that the terrorists are divided into masterminds, who do not exceed a few dozen, and activists, who number in the hundreds. He stressed the need to differentiate in the manner of confronting the two elements. He said that the masterminds know full well that what they aim at is not what religion dictates but they use religion to recruit the activists and incite them to carry out acts of terror.

Musa exhorted religious scholars to elucidate Koranic verses and the Prophet Muhammad's parables, which the terrorists interpret as they wish and masterminds use to incite acts of terror. He stressed that the door is still open for those embroiled in terrorism: They can give it up and the law will protect them and the security agencies will welcome them. They will be safe if they lay down their arms and give themselves up so that the judiciary can handle their cases.

Musa called on religious societies and groups in Egypt, "including those who call themselves the Muslim Brotherhood" to decisively define their position on terrorism, noting that the issue cannot tolerate compromises, playing with words, vacillation, or even maintaining silence. He emphasized that these religious trends must take a decisive stand on acts of terror and not justify or find excuses for them. He said that Muslim Egypt, whose Constitution stipulates that Islam is the main source of legislation, will not shirk the Koran's call to promote virtue and suppress vice.

Musa said that the correct yardstick of the outcome of the confrontation between the police and terrorists requires defining the number of personalities the terrorists wanted to assassinate and the targets they wanted to destroy. He said their goals number in the thousands whereas they have only succeeded in carrying out dozens. He pointed out that terrorism is not a security problem but a political, popular, religious, educational, and informational issue that requires concerted efforts to confront. He said that there is a need for all political, executive, and popular establishments to draw up plans to present to public opinion and implement. He noted that mere good intentions and individual initiatives are no longer sufficient or capable of confronting the danger. He added that totally eliminating terrorism and considering this the yardstick of success is not feasible because in no country or time have the security agencies succeeded in completely eliminating simple or serious crimes.

Minister: Terrorists Threaten Citizen's Future

NC3003094893 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0845 GMT 30 Mar 93

[Excerpts] Cairo, 30 Mar (MENA)—Information Minister Safwat al-Sharif has said that some countries who profess Islam and hide behind a slogan of "Islamic Reawakening" are exporting terrorism to other Islamic countries to destabilize them and undermine their economies. He noted that this harms the international reputation of Islam and Islamic countries.

In a statement to MENA, the information minister said that Egypt is the source of all true Islamic values and is home to al-Azhar, which produced scholars and preachers who bore the true banner of Islam to the whole world. [passage omitted]

Al-Sharif noted that the terrorists want to strike at the citizen's livelihood, future, and progress. They have decided to do this at a time when Egypt is ready to make progress, through carefully studied economic policies, after the people surmounted a critical stage. He explained that the terrorist operations began just as tourism began to flourish, inflation was going down, the balance of payments was improving, the infrastructure was completed, and Egypt was on the threshold of a great step forward based on scientific foundations, struggle, and sacrifices. [passage omitted]

Head of Information Service on Terrorist Incidents

NC2703123193 Cairo MENA in English 1130 GMT 27 Mar 93

[Text] Paris, March 27 (MENA)—Head of the Egyptian State Information Service (ESIS) Dr. Mamduh al-Biltaji said Western media magnify the incidents of terrorism in Egypt.

In an interview with Arabic-language "Al-Sharq" radio, Dr. al- Biltaji said Egypt does not deny the occurrence of such incidents but believes they are limited.

Egyptians have grown more aware of the danger of the terrorist groups, something which helped a lot in the fall of most of these groups, ESIS head said.

Dr. al-Biltaji ruled out the possibility that these incidents would endanger the regime in Egypt, stressing that the state confronts terrorist groups firmly and in a law-abiding way.

The Egyptians are politically mature and reject extremism and terrorism, which make no real part of their psychological, cultural or historical fabric.

Democracy is safeguarded in Egypt; elections are held in full freedom, no party was banned nor a newspaper closed, he said.

Dr. al-Biltaji denied any infiltration of fundamentalists and members of terrorist groups into state bodies and the army.

Asked about the effect of terrorist acts on tourism, he said that the tourism sector has been negatively affected by such acts, which sent plummeting the revenues of one of Egypt's basic foreign currency earners.

There is no place for dialogue with terrorist groups unless they change their methods of killing, intimidation and assaults on people and join the democratic community, he said.

Asked if terrorism in Egypt is incited by foreign parties, Dr. al-Biltaji said all those who committed the terrorist acts were Egyptian.

However, he said that certainly some elements have received training abroad—in Arab and Muslim countries. Others received financial assistance, he said, referring to the complicity of some foreign parties in providing some terrorist elements with funds.

Thirty Arrested Following Aswan Bomb Blast 28 Mar

NC2903155093 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1506 GMT 29 Mar 93

[Text] Aswan, 29 Mar (MENA)—Security services in Aswan last night arrested 30 people in connection with a bomb attack on a police car in a street in Aswan, south Egypt, last night. Six people were hurt in the attack, two seriously.

The detainees, aged 18 and 19, are being questioned to determine their criminal responsibility and to reveal the scale of the attack and its perpetrators.

According to initial investigations, two terrorists threw an explosive device at the police car and fled the scene. Six passersby were hurt and the police car was damaged.

Initial examination by criminal laboratory experts found that the explosive device contained the highly explosive TNT.

'Terrorist Organization' Members Arrested in Cairo

NC2903190793 Cairo AL-AHRAM AL-MASA'I in Arabic 25 Mar 93 p 1

[Text] Security personnel in Cairo have arrested the members of a terrorist organization inside a cafe in the center of town. The organization consists of 36 extremists, who had large quantities of explosive charges in their possession. The downtown prosecutor's office under Counselor Muhammad al-Shurbaji has initiated investigations.

Security organs and the police post in al-Azbakiyah have received information that the extremists have been using the al-Ikhlas Cafe on al-Jumhuriyah Street to sell clothes as a cover-up. The police raided the cafe, arrested the 36 extremists, and seized two jars containing aluminum phosphate, used for making explosives. The police also confiscated several letters addressed to senior officials, a number of other figures, and international news agencies.

The representative of the prosecution in northern Cairo conducted investigations, which continued until early today.

Eleven Jailed for Distributing 'Abd-al-Rahman Leaflets

NC3003142293 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1342 GMT 30 Mar 93

[Text] Aswan, 30 Mar (MENA)—The Idfu Prosecution Office in Aswan Governorate today sent 11 defendants to jail for 15 days on charges of distributing leaflets signed by Shaykh 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman, the mufti of extremist groups, who lives in the United States. Ahmad Yunis, leader of the extremist groups in Idfu Salah-al-Din, recruited members for the cell and appointed Ahmad Badr Nayil as its leader. Security forces arrested them as they distributed the leaflets.

'Extremists' Take Body From Abu Tij Police Station

NC2903151693 Cairo AL-WAFD in Arabic 27 Mar 93 p 1

[Report by 'Abdu Hasanayn in Asyut]

[Excerpt] Members of extremist groups yesterday raided the Abu Tij police station and removed the body of terrorist 'Abd-al-Rahim Hasanayn Shaddad, nicknamed al-Qaffas, who was killed by security forces on Thursday [25 March]. The extremists carried the body through Abu Tij to the Sultan al-Farghal Mosque, chanting antigovernment slogans. Village residents did not attend the funeral. The demonstrators pelted closed shops with stones and security forces fired in the air to disperse them. No casualties have been reported.

Security services under the supervision of Major General Ahmad al-Murshidi, Asyut's deputy security director, imposed strict security measures on roads into Abu Tij and vital installations and churches were guarded against any possible attacks by extremist groups. The police restored calm in the village and organized roadblocks and patrols to inspect suspicious cars. Supervised by Major General Mansur al-'Isawi, the assistant interior

minister, security forces began large-scale combing operations in Upper Egypt to locate terrorist dens in Asyut. [passage omitted]

Libya

Turkish Television Interviews al-Qadhdhafi

TA2903212193 Ankara Show Television in Turkish 1930 GMT 29 Mar 93

[Interview with Libyan leader Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi by Mithat Bereket in al-Qadhdhafi's tent in Tripoli for the "32d Day" program; date not given; al-Qadhdhafi speaks in Arabic with superimposed Turkish translation—recorded]

[Text] [Bereket] Why do you not extradite the two Libyans involved in the Lockerbie incident to the United States?

[Al-Qadhdhafi] At first, two Libyan citizens were accused. Later, the whole issue was distorted, and Libya was accused directly. In fact, the situation does not call for forcing Libya to do anything. Furthermore, Libyan law does not permit this. Also, we do not have an agreement either with the United States or with Britain for the extradition of criminals. Given this situation, it is our sovereign right to try our own citizens first, or to investigate the case. We asked the United States to extradite the U.S. pilots who killed our children in 1986. They were never handed over to us.

[Bereket] What will happen in the end? If the UN Security Council decides to extend the embargo, what will you do? Will you resist till the end?

[Al-Qadhdhafi] Let them not lift the sanctions. Let them make them as tough as they can. Our stand is clear. Furthermore, the UN Security Council resolution against Libya is unjust and invalid, because the United States and Britain—the plaintiffs— voted for this resolution as well. In other words, they were both the plaintiffs and the judges. That is unjust.

[Bereket] Are you hopeful about the Clinton administration? Do you think you can start a new era in your relations with the United States in the future?

[Al-Qadhdhafi] The fact that Bill Clinton won the election was a sort of a revolution as far as we are concerned. Clinton can lead to light a United States that was driven to darkness by the former administrations. However, the old administrations, especially Reagan, deliberately left him certain problems. For example, the latest situation in Iraq. The situation in Somalia. To a lesser degree, the situation in Yugoslavia. In fact, even Israel is creating certain problems in order to make Clinton become like the former U.S. administrations. We think that Clinton's election is like a star shining in the dark. We expect him to carry out radical changes in the United States.

[Bereket] Can a new page be opened in your relations with the United States in the future?

[Al-Qadhdhafi] We have always shared the principles of the Democrats. We had good relations with the blacks, Indians, and the poor of the United States whom the Democrats support. In fact, we cooperated with them on certain projects. For example, the blacks held a conference here. Therefore, we consider ourselves and the Democrats as working together. Of course, we do not know how they view us.

[Bereket] You have an important offer to make to Turkey about a project.

[Al-Qadhdhafi] As you know, Turkey has certain rivers that flow into the Mediterranean. The water goes to waste. We can bring this water to Libya through giant pipes under the sea. In return, we can give Turkey natural gas or oil, which we have in abundance. For this, we can use the pipe laying technique we are using in our artificial river project.

[Bereket] How do you view Turkey's position and role in the Islamic world?

[Al-Qadhdhafi] We believe that Turkey's marriage to the West is over. Therefore, like a widow, Turkey will look for a partner in its region.

[Bereket] Who do you think the widow will marry?

[Al-Qadhdhafi] Like all widows, she will try to cope with the situation [laughs].

[Bereket] How do you view Turkey's future place in the world system, and particularly in the Middle East?

[Al-Qadhdhafi] I believe that Turkey is now at a crossroads. It is advancing toward a new system. It is not easy to say what system that will be. I believe that in Turkey's future, there could be a conflict between the Turks and the Kurds. So, Turkey might have to accept the Kurds' nationalism, their territory, and identity. In fact, that is natural, I think. Only in that way can the Turkish, Kurdish, Iranian, and Arab nations make up with each other, and live together.

[Bereket] What can be done to further improve Turkish-Kurdish relations? What should Ankara do, and what should Tripoli do?

[Al-Qadhdhafi] In the relations between the two countries, Libya considers Turkey as a customer first. Of course, Turkey makes contributions to our economy. Numerous Turkish firms work in Libya. For some reason however, Turkey cannot move its relations with us from the economic field—where it develops them—to the political field. Also, the policy Turkey is pursuing now is not beneficial either to Libya or to the Arab world.

[Bereket] What is the reason Libya, the 10th largest oil-producing country in the world, does not pay its debt of $700 million to Turkey?

[Al-Qadhdhafi] I am on the side of the Turkish companies in this issue. In other words, as the revolutionary leader, I am trying to take all the measures to ensure that the companies and workers who worked here and could not get their money, or who had delays in getting their money, receive it as soon as possible. Libya might be in financial or economic difficulties. It is not only Turkish companies but all foreign companies that would suffer from that. Therefore, we are trying to make regular and constant payments. In other words, they will receive their money.

[Bereket] The embargo does not affect the Libyans much. Al-Qadhdhafi has left the administration, theoretically, to the hands of the people's committees where direct democracy is practiced. The basis for this is in the Green Book, which he wrote. The book was translated into all the languages, but at the moment the Russian translation is selling most. In this book, Al-Qadhdhafi discusses the future world system.

[Al-Qadhdhafi] First there were the empires. Then the French Revolution brought the republican system. That is also on its way out now. The peoples' system will come next. In the Green Book, I call them the Jamahiriyahs. Today, nations cannot set up a system among themselves. For example, Gorbachev could not rule Russia. He could not establish his system. Even Yeltsin cannot run his system. The same thing happened in Yugoslavia. The reason is that the nationalist movements do not want the old systems any more. In the future, the U.S. states will want full independence, too.

[Bereket] Are you saying that Western-type democracies are coming to an end?

[Al-Qadhdhafi] Of course, the people do not want certain leaders to come from above and rule them. They want the power themselves. In the end, what I said in the Green Book will come about, and the world system will be composed of small people's jamahiriyahs. The nationalist movements are pushing the world in that direction.

[Bereket] Where do you think this new world order or disorder will end? Are we moving toward a war between the religions, namely between Islam and Christianity?

[Al-Qadhdhafi] In the future, there will be popular governments. This will undoubtedly lead to havoc. The Green Book discusses the ways of overcoming this confusion with the minimum amount of loss. Furthermore, it is the nations and not the religions that will clash in the future. What is happening in Yugoslavia today is a good example. If the conflicts in Iran and Lebanon seem as conflicts between the Shiites and the Sunnis, they are not. The conflict is not religious. The Shiites act out of Iranian nationalism while the Sunnis act out of Arab nationalism. The real conflict, in other words, is between the Arab and Iranian nationalist movements.

[Bereket] Who is Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi? What sort of a person is he? What does he do? What hobbies does he have? What sports does he play?

[Al-Qadhdhafi] I have a simple life. I insist on living a life that is far removed from ostentation. I live my life in a simple tent. I usually drink camel's milk and eat dates. I do not have a significant interest in sports. I played various sports because I went to a military school. Now, I like playing football. I play whenever I have the time. Or I ride horses.

[Bereket] How do you think history will talk about you in 100 years time? As the protector of international terrorism, as the West claims, or as a hero?

[Al-Qadhdhafi] In 100 years, who al-Qadhdhafi was and what he tried to do will be better understood. The lies will be revealed.

Sudan's al-Bashir Addresses Masses 29 Mar

LD2903224693 Tripoli Libyan Television Network in Arabic 2013 GMT 29 Mar 93

[Speech by 'Umar Hasan al-Bashir, chairman of the Sudan Revolution Command Council for National Salvation, to the Libyan masses on 29 March; place not given—recorded]

[Excerpts] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. Brothers and sisters, sons of the heroic Libyan people. May God's peace, prayers, and benediction be upon you. We are very happy today at our meeting with these revolutionary young people, Arab youths, youths who have struggled for [Arab] unity. [passage omitted]

When we came to power following the revolution of [word indistinct], we were not seizing power for its own sake but in order to pave the way for the people to assume power fully. [passage omitted]

Any attempt by the enemies of this nation to strike at any part of the Arab nation proved to be an incentive and a prompter for us in Sudan to stand up firmly on the side of the Libyan people. You will find the Sudanese people in the same trench, God willing, with his brothers in the Jamahiriyah in order to repulse tyranny, to repulse injustice. [crowds chants slogans]

Brothers, we have come here today to affirm to you that the Sudanese people is are in the same trench as the Libyan people. We have come here today to affirm to you that the Sudanese people are standing on the side of unity [crowd chants slogans], the unity of the Arab people from the Gulf to the Atlantic Ocean. We will not retreat from this position; we will reinforce this position. [crowd chants slogans]

Brothers, we want to affirm to you that in recent years, indeed for more than 20 years, the Libyan people and the Libyan leadership have been holding high the banner of unity and have struggled for unity. The Jamahiriyah is

facing what it is being subjected to today for no other crime than that of having struggled for the banner of unity, and of calling for the unity of the Arab nation. We affirm to you that the Sudanese people has now joined this march, and it will stand on the side of the Libyan people struggling for the cause of Arab unity. We will struggle for its cause no matter how hard the enemies harass us, no matter how great the pressure becomes. No matter how hard the enemies of the nation harass us, we will not retreat from the decision of unity. The decision of unity is inevitable, a fateful one. [crowd chants slogans]

Brothers and sisters, with this unity we will be able, God willing, to beat all the enemies of the nation, to liberate the Arab nation, to liberate Arab decision-making, Arab money, and Arab oil from imperialist domination, God willing. Brothers, with this unity, we will be able to do away with all conspiracies. [crowd chants slogans]

We would like to stress to you here our support for the unity which the Libyan people has been defending and has made so many sacrifices for its sake and still paying dearly for it. We in Sudan are the supporters of such an unity; we will not retract from our support and we will urge others, God willing [end of sentence drowned by crowd chanting slogans]

We also appreciate and value the Libyan people's stance for unity. What the Libyan people are being subjected to now is due to their firm stance for Arab unity. [crowd chants slogans] We stress to you that this unity which the Libyan people continue [to struggle] for under the leadership of Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi [words indistinct] We will tell the brother leader openly that we are prepared for every sacrifice for the sake of that unity. [passage omitted]

Brothers and sisters, the Libyan people under the leadership of Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi have become the desired hope. Our people in occupied Palestine are awaiting their brothers in the Arab homeland to come to their rescue and to support them. We see in the Libyan youth, under the leadership of brother Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, the hope for the return of Arab unity and the return of Arab [word indistinct] with the liberation of Palestine. [crowd chants slogans]

Brothers and sisters, by this stance before you now we want to stress to you that we are with you and will remain with you for the sake of that unity which the Libyan people, under the leadership of brother Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, have persisted in defending over many years. The Sudanese people as a whole have joined the general march and, God willing, tomorrow the rest of the Arab nation will unite and we will liberate our land and defeat our enemies, and no one will be able to surround us in our land.

Greetings to you, and our best hope of success and victory for you. Pride to the Arab nation! God is great [words indistinct]. Peace and God's mercy and blessing be upon you!

People's Congresses Celebrate Ousting of British

LD2803210193 Tripoli JANA in English 1717 GMT 28 Mar 93

[Text] Tobruk, Al Rabia [March] 28, JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY— The masses of the People's Congresses in the area of Tobruk celebrated the 23rd anniversary of the eviction of the British colonial forces and bases from the Libyan Arab territory.

The popular held a massive ceremony on this occasion at Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir hall with the participation of the musical groups as flags and pictures of the leader of the revolution were carried by the buds, cadets and arms of the great al-Fatah and scouts.

Speakers highlighted the significance of this historic occasion in the life of the Libyan Arab people. They stressed that the action was national event and a universal pioneering step within the framework of enhancing peoples' freedom, supporting their struggle and countering imperialist domination and destroying its positions and bases. They pointed out that the eviction represented a fundamental step in the assertion of genuine Libyan independence achieved for the first time by the great al-Fatah revolution.

The masses of the People's Congresses of Communes in Tobruk sent a message to the leader of the revolution reaffirming their eternal adherence to people's power through communes and their constant readiness to propagate the glorious dicta of the third universal theory inside and outside the country so that the green colour will spread the world over.

Thai Participation in Chemical Weapons Projects Noted

BK3003104193 Bangkok SIAM POST in Thai 30 Mar 93 p 3

[Article: "Thai Companies Join the Production of Deadly Weapons for Libya"]

[Text] Russian politics has become the talk of the town in comparison with the latest world developments reported by renowned foreign news agencies including CNN, VISNEWS, and REUTER. However, people are now beginning to turn their attention to Libya's chemical weapons projects again. This issue lost its publicity during the Gulf war.

Libya has been labelled by the West, in particular the United States, as "the culprit" responsible for the operation of various terrorist movements. Despite several measures designed to put pressure on Libya, nobody seems to be able to put an end to the absurdity of the Libyan leader.

The first attempt of Libya to produce chemical weapons to threaten the world community was in 1984. The Libyan Government set aside a huge amount of money to hire private companies with the required technical

skills and purchased materials and equipment from Germany, Italy, Switzerland and other Asian countries including Japan, Taiwan, Singapore, and even Thailand.

The project advanced rapidly because production of chemical weapons is uncomplicated and requires the same technology used for production of powerful explosives. Chemical experts confirm that any country with medium-sized petrochemical industries, especially OPEC members, is capable of producing chemical weapons.

Moreover, the chemicals used for production of the weapons can be destroyed within a few hours without leaving any traces for later detection.

For these reasons, ill-intentioned countries wish to have their own chemical weapons plants so that they can use the lethal ordnance, as good as nuclear weapons but cheaper, to increase their bargaining power. Libya apparently has no respect for the convention which bans chemical weapons use.

The chemical weapons project is under the supervision of the Technology Center Libya [name published in English], which incorporates a chemical research center, known as Pharma 150 [name published in English], mainly relying on supplies of chemicals and equipment from private companies in Japan and Germany. After the withdrawal of the Japanese and German companies from the project due to U.S. pressure in 1985, private Thai companies were given the opportunity to take over the tasks of the Japanese and German firms.

Three former Thai workers in Libya formed three companies to do profitable business there. The three companies are Company S., owned by A. Th.; Company W., owned by Mr. Ch. in Chiang Mai Province; and Comany H., owned by Mr. A.N. [abbreviated names of companies and owners as published].

In particular, the company owned by Mr. A. Th. was responsible for sending 900 Thai nationals to replace the German and Japanese workers while taking over the procurement of supplies and construction work from the German and Japanese firms. Company W. is hired as a subcontractor responsible for operating public facilities and construction work under the project. Company H. supplies chemists and researchers for Plant Pharma 150. Since the head office of Company H. is situated in Chiang Mai Province, professors and engineers from the local renowned institute of higher education have been recruited to serve as advisors for the project.

In 1989 the United States exposed Libya's chemical weapons project based on photos taken by its spy satellites and applied measures to put pressure on Libya. The plant was closed temporarily. Libya falsely announced that the plant was destroyed by a fire.

Following a short period of inactivity, Libya revived the project with the participation of the three Thai companies. New equipment and tools were clandestinely brought to Libya with Thai workers. Some were taken apart and reassembled after their arrival in Libya. Libya is unable to purchase the equipment and tools directly from European countries due to the UN air embargo. Although the prices are as much as 500 percent higher, Libya is willing to pay for them.

With full supplies and equipment, the project was revived. However, the plant was moved to a new site in Tarhunan township, 65 km from Tripoli. The new plant, renamed Project 300, referred to among the Thai workers as Site 3, was built exactly the same as Plant Pharma 150.

The new plant is situated in two connected giant underground tunnels constructed in the desert by Company W. and scheduled to be completed in 1995. According to U.S. intelligence, the plant will concentrate on producing nerve gas.

With its bitter Plant Pharma 150 experiences, Libya decided to build the new plant underground to prevent satellite detection and air attacks.

Thai workers not involved in the project were told that the two giant tunnels are used to fetch water from the huge underground water source in the Sahara Desert to communities along the coast.

In any event, the tap water plant allegedly built by the Thai companies does provide clean water for the chemical weapons plant because clean water is one of the major parts of producing the deadly arms.

The revival of the Libyan chemical weapons project has been closely watched by the United States. The participation of the Thai private companies in Libyan lethal weapons projects is a breach of the convention on banning chemical weapons as Thailand is also a signatory to the agreement. More importantly, Thailand is acting blatantly against the resolution of the world community. If the government allows the interests of a few people to impair the country's image and prestige, Thailand will be viewed as notoriously as Libya.

Sudan

Machar's SPLA Accuses Garang's Group of Killing 45

EA3003091693 Paris AFP in English 0113 GMT 30 Mar 93

[By David Chazan]

[Text] Nairobi, March 29 (AFP)—Sudanese rebels on Monday accused a rival rebel faction of massacring at least 45 civilians and attacking a United Nations worker during a failed attack on the southern town of Kongor. Fighting which erupted in Kongor on Saturday has shut off relief supplies to some 20,000 famine victims including 500 children, U.N. officials said.

A breakaway faction of the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) led by Riak Machar said its fighters had repulsed an attack by forces loyal to the movement's founder John Garang.

Garang's group denied the attack but admitted that fighting had "intensified" in the Kongor area.

Machar's "Nasir" faction said the attackers had "murdered 45 civilians, including women and children."

But Garang's "Torit" group dismissed the accusation as a "lie" and claimed that the Nasir faction had murdered 5,000 civilians in the Kongor area two years ago. A statement from the Nasir group also claimed that Garang's forces ransacked a U.N. compound in Panyagor, near Kongor on Saturday. It said a representative of the U.N. World Food Programme (WFP) was "stripped naked and escaped death narrowly when he was shot at and missed eight times."

A WFP spokesman confirmed that shots had been fired near a WFP staffer, Jean-Francois Darcq, before he was evacuated to Nairobi. The spokesman said the details were unclear, but Darcq was unhurt and it was not sure that he had deliberately been targeted.

The spokesman said aid flights to Kongor would resume only when it became clear that the fighting had ended. The Nasir faction claimed that its forces had regained control of the town after a five-hour battle Saturday.

The Torit group, however, said in a statement that Kongor, Garang's birthplace 990 kilometres (590 miles) south of Khartoum, had fallen to Machar's forces a month ago. Since then, it said, "Fighting has been on and off with Kongor changing hands many times. It has just intensified."

Diplomats in the region said the timing of the alleged attack was crucial as Machar was reportedly holding meetings with local leaders of Garang's Dinka tribe.

They said the support of the Dinka was important to Machar, a Nuer who broke with Garang two years ago, accusing him of human rights abuses including jailing his fellow officers and favouring Dinkas over other southern tribes.

The SPLA has fought for a decade to free the mainly animist and Christian south from Islamic domination by the Arabised north.

After the SPLA split into two main factions, the government recaptured most main southern towns in a massive offensive last year.

Some 20,000 famine victims have been stranded in Kongor since aid flights were suspended Saturday, said Philip O'Brien of Operation Lifeline Sudan, a U.N.-led relief programme to the south.

"Kongor has some of the worst cases of malnutrition ever seen in south Sudan," O'Brien said. "We had only just started redressing the situation and we've been in and out because of fighting."

After 10 years of civil war, disease and famine are sweeping the south, a vast undeveloped region of savannah and swampland twice the size of France. The U.N. believes that about 1.5 of the south's estimated 3.5 million people need food or medical aid, and 800,000 of them are in danger of death.

The upsurge in fighting only a week after Garang announced a ceasefire and agreed to peace talks with the government next month damped hopes of an early end to the conflict. "Whatever either rebel group agrees with the government is meaningless unless they themselves are united," said a senior Western diplomat.

SPLA Denies Garang To Attend Talks in Nigeria

NC2903130193 Paris AFP in English 1158 GMT 29 Mar 93

[Text] Cairo, March 29 (AFP)—The rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) has denied Sudanese government claims that SPLA leader Colonel John Garang will personally attend a new round of peace talks hosted by Nigeria. A Garang aide, Edward Lino, told AFP in Cairo that the SPLA delegation to the Nigerian capital Abuja will be headed by Major James Wani Igga, the movement's political and civilian affairs spokesman.

The head of the Khartoum government team in negotiations, Muhammad al-Amin Khalifah, on March 8 said Garang had made a "commitment personally to attend the talks", which the junta considered a "positive development." Khalifah said Garang's presence would "lend authority and credibility" to decisions reached at the 'Abuja-2' talks. No date for the parley has yet been announced, but the Sudanese government has several times indicated that discussions would resume around the end of this month.

"The government is trying to present the SPLA as Garang's personal business," Lino said. "But Garang is not the owner of the movement, just its leader." If Garang were to head the SPLA delegation, the Revolutionary Command Council in Khartoum would have to send its chief, General 'Umar Hasan al-Bashir, Lino added.

He also ruled out attendance at the talks by dissident factions in the SPLA, as had occurred at the first and fruitless meeting in Abuja in May and June last year.

Garang had last month told Sudanese Planning Minister 'Ali al-Haj in Kampala that "if dissident factions in the SPLA were present" in Abuja on the government side, "the whole of the Sudanese opposition should participate" alongside the SPLA.

The SPLA, which has been fighting central authority in Khartoum since 1983, considers that the Nasir faction of Riek Machar and another faction led by William Nyuon Bany are instruments of the regime.

The SPLA has formed an National Democratic Alliance opposition front with most political parties dissolved after Beshir's coup of June 1989, in which he overthrew a democratically elected government.

Lino said that if the mainstream SPLA reached an accord with the government, dissident factions would be bound to abide by it, failing which "it will be a matter of disregard for the law and it will be easy to deal with that."

The SPLA has battled successive governments in Khartoum to end domination of the mainly animist and Christian south of Sudan by the Arabised north.

Tunisia

PLO's 'Arafat Views Talks With President Ben Ali

LD2603223693 Tunis Tunisian Republic Radio Network in Arabic 2100 GMT 26 Mar 93

[Text] This morning at Carthage Palace President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali met with Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat. Foreign Minister Habib Ben Yahia, and Hakam Bal'awi, member of the Fatah movement, attended the meeting.

'Arafat stated afterward that the meeting was important and it coincided with the presence of the negotiating Palestinian delegation in Washington to meet with the U.S. secretary of state. He explained that he had discussed with his excellency the president all the aspects of the peace process and the obstacles that stand in its way foremost of which are the issue of the Palestinian deportees and the need to find an honorable solution to this issue, as well as other obstacles, namely the serious escalation of the Israeli repression against the sons of the Palestinian people and the violation of the sanctity of Muslim and Christian holy shrines in the occupied territories.

President Yasir 'Arafat added that the meeting with his excellency the president also dealt with the question of the coming Arab foreign ministers meetings and the importance of these meetings to the question of bolstering all forms of Arab solidarity. He noted in this connection that he thanked his excellency the president for the attention the Tunisian president, government, and people have been giving to the Palestinian issue and their concern for the progress of the peace process in all its aspects.

At the end of his statement, Mr Yasir 'Arafat explained that he told the president that the Palestinian side's desire is to remove all the obstacles so that the peace process can go forward and an honorable and just solution is found to the Middle East issue and the Palestinian question which is the heart of the conflict in the area.

CDR Central Committee Opens Eighth Session 27 Mar

LD2703082393 Tunis Tunisian Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0700 GMT 27 Mar 93

[Excerpt] At the invitation of President Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali, chairman of the Constitutional Democratic Rally [CDR], the eighth session of the Rally's Central Committee will begin today under the supervision of Prime Minister Hamed Karoui, who is also the Rally's deputy chairman. The Political Bureau [of the Rally] drafted the agenda for this session at its meeting last Monday [22 Mar]. It will focus on two essential axes. The first will be a debate of a special working paper pertaining to the status of woman in political life and the means to promote and develop this status. The second concerns the preparations for the second congress of the Rally scheduled for next July. [passage omitted]

Ruling Party's Neffati at Democratic Socialists' Congress

LD2603234093 Tunis Tunisian Republic Radio Network in Arabic 2100 GMT 26 Mar 93

[Excerpts] The extraordinary congress of the Movement of Democratic Socialists [MDS] opened this evening in Safaqis. The congress will continue from today through 28 March under the slogan of entrenching the democratic pluralist path. The opening of the congress was attended in particular by Chedli Neffati, the secretary general of the Constitutional Democratic Rally, as well as representatives of a number of parties, organizations, societies and Mohamed Rachdi, the governor of Safaqis.

On this occasion, MDS leader Mohamed Moada made a speech in which he said that convening this congress represents a national event that strengthens the democratic pluralist path which Tunisia is living these days under the direction and the leadership of His Excellency President Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali. He explained that the movement will try to make this congress an extraordinary one not only from the legal aspect but also with regard to the topics it will tackle especially the question of the opposition role of the national parties in the transformation process. [passage omitted].

He said that the MDS and the opposition generally are called upon to define their role in the democratic transformation. He pointed out that the opposition found nothing but assistance from President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, and that they are called on to work for and to be active in the task of entrenching the democratic pluralist path. [passage omitted]

Secretary General of the Constitutional Democratic Rally Chedli Neffati made a speech in the name of the Rally and its President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, and in the name of its militants on the occasion of convening the extraordinary congress of the MDS. In his speech he voiced his esteem for Mr Mohamed Moada and all the militants of the movement and appreciation for their

effort in the service of the homeland and their support for the ties of the civil society and change. [passage omitted]

The secretary general of the Rally stressed that the 7 November movement had realized a national reconciliation which brought about a unity that binds the forces which are struggling for the establishment of democracy, progress, and freedom. [passage omitted]

Human Rights League President on Court Ruling

LD2803152093 Paris Radio France International in French 1230 GMT 28 Mar 93

[Interview with Moncef Marzouki, president of the Tunisian League of Human Rights, by Assane Diop; place and date not given—recorded]

[Text] The Tunisian League of Human Rights has been authorized to resume its activities. The court's ruling was issued yesterday after a ban of many months. For its president, this is essentially a political decision. Moncef Marzouki was interviewed by Assane Diop:

[Begin recording] [Marzouki] It is a turning point, a very positive step. I hope that this is the first sign announcing democracy in Tunisia.

[Diop] In practice, will you be able to resume your activities?

[Marzouki] Yes, absolutely. I will call the management committee next week, and then we will resume all our activities, which are, essentially, the activities of any human rights league—that is, promoting and defending human rights, checking the level of the violation of liberties, and—above all—preparing our congress.

[Diop] The ruling on the substance of the case still has to be issued. What do you expect from it?

[Marzouki] I think that it is essentially a political decision. I mean, there is a legal imbroglio and a legal dimension in this affair, but it is essentially a political decision. [end recording]

Kuwait

Lebanese President Arrives on Official Visit

LD3003100993 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 0943 GMT 30 Mar 93

[Excerpt] Kuwait, 30 Mar (KUNA)—Lebanese President Ilyas al-Hirawi arrived here today on an official two-day visit to Kuwait. This visit falls within his Gulf tour. [passage omitted]

Qatar

* Fundamentalist Leader Reported Captured in Doha

93P50115A London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 24 Mar 93 p 1

[Text] Doha, Cairo—Informed sources in Doha stated yesterday that Dr. Majdi al-Safti, leader of the al-Najun min al-Nar [those delivered from the fire] organization—who was arrested in Doha a few days ago—was still undergoing long, in-depth questioning by the Qatari authorities.

These sources disclosed that the Qatari police have also arrested seven to nine people who are suspected of being in direct contact with al-Safti and whose cases have been turned over to the investigators.

It is expected that the Egyptian Government will request that the Qatari Government deliver al-Safti to them after the end of the current investigation in preparation for retrial, because a sentence of death in absentia was delivered against him in 1987. Al-Safti had been accused of leading a group of followers in assassination attempts on Hasan Abu-Basha and al-Nabawi Tsma'il, two former interior ministers, and Makram Muhammad Ahmad, former doyen of the journalists [union].

The director of the Arab police [as published], Major General 'Uthman Musa, affirmed that he has submitted a request to judicial body in the State of Qatar to permit extradition of al-Safti according to the Arab agreement to deliver criminals and those accused of crimes and in accordance with the bilateral agreements signed between Egypt and Qatar.

The Egyptian ambassador in Doha, Mustafa Mahmud Husayn, stated that he had not, until evening before last, received any decision in this matter from Cairo and refused to go into detail about what was going on in this case.

According to confirmed security information, the Qatari police arrested al-Safti in Doha after an altercation between him and a Qatari citizen over a traffic accident. These sources said that al-Safti's relationship with the extremist groups were clearly exposed during the long interrogations.

United Arab Emirates

Yemeni Foreign Minister on Visit, Relations

JN3003113493 Abu Dhabi United Arab Emirates Radio Network in Arabic 0930 GMT 30 Mar 93

[Text] His Excellency Dr. 'Abd-al-Karim al-Iryani, foreign minister in the Republic of Yemen, has stated that His Highness Shaykh Zayid Ibn Sultan Al Nuhayyan, president of the United Arab Emirates, has asked him to communicate ideas and remarks to His Excellency Lieutenant General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, chairman of the Presidential Council in the Republic of Yemen, on all that is good and of interest whether on the level of relations between the two countries or on the level of the Arab nation.

In an interview with Emirates News Agency, Dr. al-Iryani said he held frank and heart-to-heart talks with his highness the president.

He added that he listened to all that the president had to say about what he believes should exist between the Arab countries as a whole. He said that Yemen is proud that his highness the president has been one of the first to call on the Arabs to rally together and forgive one another so that they can protect themselves and their interests. He said that he is happy that his country has taken the initiative to respond to the call when it was made and again during his current visit to the country which he described as successful. He added: During this visit, we heard everything we should hear from an Arab personality such as His Highness Shaykh Zayid.

Yemen

Al-Bid Urges Voter Participation in Elections

JN2803095193 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0430 GMT 28 Mar 93

[Text] Yesterday, the Central Committee of the Yemeni Socialist Party [YSP] began the work of its extraordinary 29th session under brother 'Ali Salim al-Bid, vice chairman of the Presidential Council and secretary general of the YSP Central Committee.

In an inaugural speech, brother al-Bid urged all citizens to go to the polling stations on the date set for elections to vote for whomever they deem capable of shouldering the responsibility. He also urged the Higher Elections Committee to do all that would enable citizens to cast their votes on the set date for elections in exercise of their democratic right, which is enshrined in the Constitution.

Committee Discusses Preparations for Elections

JN2803095493 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0430 GMT 28 Mar 93

[Text] Brother Lieutenant General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, chairman of the Presidential Council and secretary general of the General People's Congress [GPC], yesterday presided over a meeting of the GPC General Committee.

During this meeting, the conferees discussed basic issues pertaining to the preparations and arrangements for the free and direct legislative elections due to be held in the country. They also discussed the GPC's election platform as well as the reports submitted by the GPC's supervisory committees in all provinces and election constituencies. During this meeting, the General Committee endorsed the GPC's election platform.

PKK's Ocalan Said Persuaded To Give Up Fighting

NC2903172393 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1600 GMT 29 Mar 93

[Text] Brother Jalal Talabani, secretary general of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, has stated that the Iraqi opposition will meet in Damascus soon.

In a press statement, brother Talabani said that Syria will continue its support for the activities of the united Iraqi opposition. He said that he has succeeded in convincing Kurdish Workers Party leader Abdullah Ocalan to relinquish fighting and accept the peaceful political solution.

Warning Over Compliance With Resolutions Noted

JN2903175393 Baghdad INA in English 1340 GMT 29 Mar 93

[Text] Baghdad, Mar. 29, INA—The Iraqi English language daily "THE BAGHDAD OBSERVER" said in today's editorial that the United States, Britain, France and Russia have on Friday warned Iraq to comply with what they termed as U.N. resolutions.

The warning issued by the four permanent Security Council members stated that any "provocative action" by Baghdad will be met with a "firm response."

THE OBSERVER questioned whether the warning, issued three days before the Security Council's meeting to discuss sanctions on Iraq, was in preparation for further extension of the almost 32-month-old embargo.

The paper referred to the BBC Saturday morning broadcast announcing that sanctions were "expected" to be renewed as an answer to part of the question.

The paper added: "In fact the renewal of the embargo has become something highly expected whenever the issue of sanctions was due for discussion before the Security Council".

The warning made by the four powers to Iraq on Friday cannot be justified since the country has complied with all Security Council resolutions, the paper said.

The paper pointed out that Iraq's cooperation had often been confirmed through statements given by U.N. inspection teams in Baghdad. However, on many occasions, statements released by heads of the inspection teams changed once they were back in New York.

Before the U.S.-led aggression against Iraq on January 17, 1991, the Security Council resolutions, motivated by imperialist designs, were meant to break up the Iraqi people's resolve to face up to injustice. Seeing that the Iraqi people's determination was not shaken by the most barbaric assault against their country, Washington and its allies resorted to what they called international legitimacy resolutions to undermine the Iraqi people, the paper said.

The foreign powers, along with their stooges in the Gulf, sought pretexts to avoid any serious debate on the Iraqi people's plight under the sanctions. They have shifted the review of sanctions for a whole week, just because some Muslim members of the Security Council were on the 'Id al-Fitr holiday.

The daily concluded that warnings and threats do not frighten Iraq. It added that it was far better for the U.S.-led camp to drop generalization and say what they precisely wanted and what specific items of the U.N. resolutions were yet to be implemented.

'Arbitrary Decision' Extending Sanctions Expected

JN2903175193 Baghdad INA in English 1315 GMT 29 Mar 93

[Excerpt] Baghdad, Mar 29, INA—BABIL newspaper today expected the United Nations Security Council to adopt an arbitrary decision when it reviews today the sanctions it has imposed on Iraq more than two years ago.

In a commentary published today, the daily asked about the reasons behind antagonizing Iraq and wondered what could be the justifications for maintaining the sanctions against it.

The daily pointed out that blockade resolution had been adopted when the Iraqi troops entered Kuwait. Hence it should have been lifted soon after the Iraqi forces' withdrawal from Kuwait.

It added that the influential powers at the UN Security Council had put forward a new pretext to the effect that the blockade would not be lifted unless Iraq implemented all international resolutions.

The paper stressed Iraq's respect for international law and legitimacy provided that such legitimacy would not be used as a cover for interference in its internal affairs or a pretext to violate its national sovereignty.

It confirmed that perpetuating the blockade which claimed the lives of thousands of Iraqi children, women and elderly people due to the shortage of food and medicine represented the central link in the chain of conspiracies against Iraq and its people. [passage omitted]

Memo to UN Protests U.S. Airspace 'Violations'

JN2903093693 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0855 GMT 29 Mar 93

[Text] New York, 29 Mar (INA)—Iraq yesterday filed a protest memorandum with the UN secretary general concerning U.S. violations of its airspace for provocation and surveillance purposes.

The memorandum noted that U.S. aircraft mounted a total of 614 hostile violations over some areas in the north and south during the period 17-25 March 1993.

The memorandum added that a U.S. TR-1 reconnaissance plane violated Iraqi airspace for two hours on 17 March over the southern region.

Allied 'Aggressive' Sorties Protested to Arab League

JN2903093393 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0845 GMT 29 Mar 93

[Text] Cairo, 29 Mar (INA)—Iraq has lodged a protest with the Arab League over the continued violation of its airspace by U.S., British, and French aircraft, which take off from bases in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

In a letter to the Arab League's secretary general, the Iraqi permanent representative said that these violations pose a serious threat to Iraq's security, sovereignty, and national unity.

The letter explained that hostile aircraft violated Iraqi airspace on Friday, 26 March, carrying out 46 aggressive sorties.

Agriculture Minister, Turkish Envoy Discuss Cooperation

JN2803141993 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1315 GMT 28 Mar 93

[Text] Baghdad, 28 Mar (INA)—Agriculture and Irrigation Minister 'Abd-al-Wahhab Mahmud al-Sabbagh today received Turkish Charge d'Affaires Sadi Calislar in Baghdad. The officials reviewed cooperation between the two neighboring countries, especially in the agricultural field.

The Turkish diplomat stressed that his country is ready to cooperate with Iraq in various areas, particularly in the agricultural arena. He also voiced his admiration for the progress and achievements Iraq is currently witnessing.

Two MiG's Reportedly Crash on Training Mission

NC2803172393 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1600 GMT 28 Mar 93

[Text] Our private sources have learned that two MIG aircraft of the Iraqi regime have crashed near al-Habbaniyah military base. According to our sources, the two aircraft were on a training mission. One of the two pilots, who is from al-Ramadi town, died in the crash, the cause of which is unknown.

Popular Unity, Support for Saddam Stressed

JN2803140593 Baghdad INA in English 1320 GMT 28 Mar 93

[Text] Baghdad, Mar 28, INA—THE BAGHDAD OBSERVER daily newspaper today said some of Iraq's neighbours seem to be miscalculating the present situation in the region. Accordingly, they view Iraq as the weak prey which is now dizzy under the pressure of the ongoing sanctions and following the U.S.-led 30-nation aggression in 1991.

The fact remains that such a view is no more than a "mid-Summer night's dream" which cannot stand the solid ground of truth. The truth is that, regardless of all difficulties, the Iraqis remain united in their national obligation as a people to offer all sacrifices in defence of their country. In this, they stand firmly in support of their government led by President Saddam Husayn.

War Damage to Schools Estimated at 1.079 Billion Dinars

JN2703102393 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0950 GMT 27 Mar 93

[Excerpt] Baghdad, 27 Mar (INA)—Material damage to educational installations and institutions in Baghdad and the governorates caused by the U.S.-Atlantic-Zionist aggression and the chapter of treason and treachery has been put at 1.079 billion dinars.

A report issued by the Ministry of Education says that the damage caused to these installations and institutions by the 30-state aggression amounted to 61,818,000 dinars, whereas the damage caused by the chapter of treason and treachery totaled 1,017,150,000 dinars. The report further noted that 780 schools were attacked during the 30-state aggression. These schools were either totally destroyed or partially damaged. [passage omitted]

Saddam Doubles Awards for Wheat, Barley Collection

JN2803141593 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1130 GMT 28 Mar 93

[Text] Leader President Saddam Husayn, may God protect him, has ordered that awards granted to those governorates which excel in their campaign to harvest wheat and barley crops be doubled. His excellency the president ordered that the first award be 7 million dinars, the second 5 million dinars, the third 4 million dinars, and the fourth 3 million dinars.

His excellency the president, may God protect him, also ordered that an additional 2-million dinar award be granted to each and every governorate, whose employees do not show any negligence in their performance, as determined by the standards established for the purposes of this campaign.

This noble gesture by leader President Saddam Husayn toward the governorates which obtain high grades in the collection of wheat and barley comes in support of the jihad being waged by the mujahidin in the course of their efforts to break the unfair embargo imposed on Iraq, and in appreciation of all the noble efforts being made to secure food supplies for the people, so that they may continue their jihad and victorious march until God allows for final victory over the enemies, God willing.

General Closure Imposed on Territories 30 Mar

TA3003100193 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0942 GMT 30 Mar 93

[News conference with Cabinet Secretary Elyaqim Rubinstein with correspondents at the Prime Minister's Office in Jerusalem on 30 March—live]

[Text] [Rubinstein] The decisions of the inner cabinet are: 1) To impose a general closure on Judaea and Samaria as of midnight tonight, in addition to the closure currently in effect in the Gaza Strip, which will continue; 2) To adopt additional measures to increase security within the boundaries of the State of Israel and in Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza.

[IDF Radio's political correspondent Natan Gutman] How long will the curfew last?

[Rubinstein] That has not yet been decided.

[Qol Yisra'el's political correspondent Shlomo Raz] Could you be slightly more specific about the additional measures to be taken?

[Rubinstein] No. These measures have been presented, and they will definitely be examined by the defense establishment according to the circumstances. I do not want to elaborate any further.

[Gutman] What is the purpose of the closure on the territories?

[Rubinstein] The purpose of the closure is the usual and known one: to increase security and to reduce the friction with people who can potentially do harm, etc. Of course, it will inconvenience some of the population, but this is the price to be paid for the terror operating from there.

[Raz] Were there any reservations voiced about the closure because of the limited effectiveness of such a step?

[Rubinstein] I do not want to go into any more details. Gentlemen, I thank you very much.

Police Minister on Closure

TA3003105193 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1005 GMT 30 Mar 93

[News conference by Police Minister Moshe Shahal with correspondents outside the Prime Minister's Office in Jerusalem; broadcast in progress—live]

[Excerpts] ...[Unidentified correspondent] Will the closure continue until after the Passover holiday [from 5 to 12 April]?

[Shahal] I cannot tell how long the closure will remain in effect. It will continue for as long as necessary.

[Political correspondent Shlomo Raz] Sir, is the inner cabinet's decision to impose a general closure not tantamount to giving aspirin to a cancer patient? Do you call it a serious decision?

[Shahal] I think the question is inappropriate. The decision was made after consulting all the security branches, the chief of staff, the Shin Bet, and the Israel Police. It was made at the recommendation of the security forces and, of course, the political level. It was also decided to use other measures, but these will not be publicized in the media. They are meant to deal with the recent events, particularly this last month, which call for a special response. Many lines of action were proposed and these will be examined, but I will not go into detail. We will not put up with the surge in terror attacks. We know this problem calls for the cooperation of the public and for diverse and numerous measures. It cannot be dealt with by talk or by questions such as whether it will or will not be effective. The Israeli people have been through similar situations before. We must deal with such situations and their attendant circumstances. The closure is an immediate measure to reduce the friction with the terrorists and the possibilities available to them, but it is not an isolated measure. [passage omitted]

[Raz] Do you support the establishment of an ad hoc national emergency government? Deputy Minister Mordekhay Gur has spoken in favor of such a notion.

[Shahal] Such governments have been established in the past as a solution, but they did not solve any problems. I do not suggest treading paths that are irrelevant to the issue currently at stake, which is to deploy in such a way as to locate, hurt, and capture the terrorists and wanted men. The facts are known, and the security forces have the appropriate information and tools to deal with the situation. We will act according to the circumstances in order to safeguard security. I do not think that talk about such notions makes any relevant contribution. [passage omitted]

More on Inner Cabinet Decisions

TA3003115293 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1100 GMT 30 Mar 93

[Report by political correspondent Natan Gutman]

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] The official statement released by Cabinet Secretary Elyaqim Rubinstein did not elaborate on the steps decided on by the inner cabinet. Most of them, however, deal with increasing IDF [Israel Defense Forces] activities in the territories: IDF forces in the territories will be beefed up, house-to-house searches will be conducted, and the operations against the armed squads will be intensified.

Political sources assess that the inner cabinet's decision will only delay the Palestinian answer about returning to the peace talks in Washington.

In the meantime, here is the first reaction to the inner cabinet decision from the direction of the Palestinian delegation: The closure on the territories will only damage the peace process and will not have an effect on the level of violence. This is the reaction of sources in the Palestinian delegation to the peace talks.

Two Policemen Killed in 'Nationalistic' Attack

TA3003055093 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0505 GMT 30 Mar 93

[Text] Two policemen belonging to the traffic control police were murdered at dawn in an ambush north of Hadera. Their bullet- riddled bodies were found in their car, with its engine still running. The two had been summoned to the place by an anonymous telephone caller who claimed that there had been an accident near the Talme El'azar junction.

This was a nationalistic attack, and it is assumed that it was perpetrated by at least two people. The assailants fled, taking the victims' guns with them. Wide-scale searches are under way at the site in cooperation with the Army. The police commissioner and senior police officers have rushed to the scene.

Police Minister Moshe Shahal has said that the prime minister will convene the inner cabinet to discuss the situation. According to him, the security forces' activity must be stepped up in view of the escalation of terror.

Coalition, Opposition React

TA3003075493

[Editorial Report] Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew at 0600 GMT on 30 March reports various reactions to the murder of two policemen near Hadera earlier this morning.

In a recorded passage, Health Minister Hayim Ramon says: "There are no magic formulas in the war against terror. This is a tough war, which we will have to go through; it is a war to which there is a long-term solution that consists of a disengagement between us and them."

In another recorded passage, Likud Knesset Member [MK] Ari'el Sharon says: "In the past, I proposed the establishment of an emergency government of experts for a defined period of time in order to fight terror. In view of what has been happening, I would like to say that the blood of Israel's citizens, who are being constantly murdered and stabbed, is on the hands of this government, which failed to accept my proposal at that time."

The report adds that "Moledet leader Rehav'am Ze'evi is demanding that the government announce the cessation of the talks with the Palestinians and immediately deport the families of all the perpetrators of terror and murderers in the last few months.

"Meretz faction chairman Ran Kohen says that two parallel steps should be taken at once: bringing forward a debate on a pullout from Gaza and reinforcing the presence of the security forces in dangerous areas."

Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 0700 GMT on 30 March reports that "Likud leader Binyamin Netanyahu has lashed out at the government, saying it is not doing enough to put an end to terror. He called for closing down all the bodies that help the terrorists and allowing only members of organizations that publicly denounce terrorism to be employed in Israel.

"Tzomet MK Refa'el Eytan has called on the government to declare a state of emergency, arrest instigators, and enforce capital punishment at once.

"MK's Hammer and Levi of the National Religious Party have collected the signatures of 20 MK's calling for an urgent Knesset session during the holiday recess and have submitted the request to Knesset Speaker Shevah Weiss."

Killings, Woundings, Search for Suspects Reported

Stabbed Israeli Dies

TA2903185693 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1830 GMT 29 Mar 93

[Excerpts] An Israeli has been murdered by stabbing near Khan Yunus in the Gaza Strip. Our army affairs correspondent Netan'el Semrik is in the studio with the details:

The stabbing occurred at about 1900 tonight. A Qatif Bloc inhabitant was stabbed in the upper part of his body, sustaining critical injuries. He received medical treatment on the spot, and was then evacuated to hospital by helicopter. Some 30 minutes ago, he was pronounced dead.

The attack occurred near Khan Yunus. Our correspondent Roni Sofer, who is in the Gaza Strip now, reports that the authorities have not yet announced capturing a terrorist or terrorists responsible for the murder.

A large number of IDF [Israel Defense Forces] troops are extensively combing the area. It will be noted that the Gaza Strip is now under night curfew. Official Army elements announced tonight that the general closure in the Gaza Strip will continue tomorrow. [passage omitted]

Our correspondent Roni Sofer has just informed us that the preliminary investigation shows that the victim was apparently stabbed by a Palestinian worker employed in his hothouses.

One Killed, 1 Wounded in West Bank

TA3003055693 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 30 Mar 93

[Text] In al-Jalazun, near Ramallah, soldiers last night shot and killed a young man who had been among a group of residents throwing stones at the Army unit. The family removed the body from the hospital for burial before an autopsy could be performed.

In the village of Dura, near Bethlehem, a 25-year-old man was wounded by Army gunfire. The soldiers had earlier ordered masked men armed with axes and found daubing slogans on walls to halt. When they tried to flee the scene, the soldiers opened fire, wounding one.

Border Policeman Killed

TA2703182893 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1800 GMT 27 Mar 93

[Text] Lance Corporal Jamal Musaliha, a 19-year-old border policeman from the village of Dabburiya on the slopes of Mount Tabor, was fatally shot this morning in an ambush in Tulkarm.

Our army affairs correspondent Karmela Menashe reports that the terrorist fired several shots from close range at a Border Police jeep which was patrolling a busy street. Jamal Musaliha was killed as a result of the shooting. Other policemen returned fire but the terrorist managed to disappear into the crowd and escape. Two local residents were lightly injured by the shots.

Colonel M., the commander of the sector, said that the security forces had a description of the terrorist. The colonel noted that the terrorist had not been masked and had fired from close range in broad daylight. He stressed the severity of the incident and said that it would force the security forces to carry out initiated activity inside the towns in the territories. The security forces are currently investigating the incident and the patrol's reactions.

Border Police Commander Yitzhaq Aharonovich said that Jamal Musaliha had volunteered for the Border Police six months ago and had been an outstanding policeman. Several suspects have been arrested.

Gazan Killed by Masked Men

TA2803072393 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 28 Mar 93

[Text] In the al-Shaykh Radwan neighborhood of Gaza city, several shots have been fired from a moving car at an IDF [Israel Defense Forces] patrol. Nobody was hurt and the soldiers returned fire. Also in Gaza city, three masked men killed a local resident yesterday who was apparently thought to be cooperating with the Israeli authorities.

In the al-Shakyh Jarrah neighborhood in East Jerusalem, a firebomb was thrown at an Israeli car last night. It hit the car, but did not explode and caused no injuries nor damage.

Jew Stabs Arab in Jerusalem

TA2803200693 Jerusalem Israel Television Network in Hebrew 1900 GMT 28 Mar 93

[Text] An Arab youth was slightly injured when stabbed by a Jew in Jerusalem this evening. Our correspondent Uri Kohen-Aharonov reports that the Arab, a resident of Bayt Sahur, was stabbed after he addressed a Jewish youth and told him that his car tires were slashed. A short while ago, an unidentified caller announced that a Jewish organization known as DOV [right-wing settler organization] is responsible for the attack.

Jew Wounded in Jerusalem Stabbing

TA2803183393 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1800 GMT 28 Mar 93

[Text] A Jew was stabbed in the back this evening in Jerusalem, near the Armon Hanetziv promenade. Our police affairs correspondent Moshe Nussbaum reports that the incident took place at 1730 GMT. The initial report we have says the man was taken to the Biqur Holim Hospital by a taxi driver, and that he was brought there with the knife still sticking from his back. Our correspondent 'Ofra Nehmad reports that an initial examination at the hospital determined his wound to be moderate.

Security Forces Blow Up Houses

TA2603201993 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 2000 GMT 26 Mar 93

[Text] The security forces blew up several houses after evacuating their residents during a search for wanted fugitives in Rafah. The wanted men were not found. Two men and a woman were arrested on suspicion of being connected with Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement]. A bunker containing rifles, grenades and ammunition was discovered in one of the houses this morning. This was reported by our army affairs correspondent Karmela Menashe.

A 13-year-old was slightly injured by IDF [Israel Defense Forces] gunfire at stonethrowers in the village of Mazra'ah al-Qibliyah. The soldiers took the boy to the hospital.

Rabinovich: U.S. in No Position To Make Promises

TA3003055293 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 30 Mar 93

[Text] The Palestinians have rejected a U.S. offer of new assurances and gestures if they attend the Middle East peace talks on April 20th. Palestinian spokeswoman Hanan 'Ashrawi told reporters in Amman that the offer made during a meeting with State Department officials in Washington is insufficient. According to REUTERS, the offer includes an American guarantee that Israel will refrain from deportations in the future. Israel's ambassador to Washington, Itamar Rabinovich, however, denies such a guarantee was made. Reporter Dani Gur-Arye asked Rabinovich if he is disappointed at the Arab foreign ministers' failure to decide in Damascus on attending the next round of peace talks:

[Begin recording] [Rabinovich] I am not disappointed in the following ways: Of course, I would have liked them to respond today and create a situation whereby we all know for sure that the talks will start on April 20th, and in that case we could all have begun thinking about what needs to be done to move the negotiations forward rather than focus on the question of starting them. I am not disappointed in the sense that in the past, on a number of occasions, the Arab participants delayed their response to the last possible moment, and I am not disappointed

in the sense that we did not quite expect the Damascus meeting to issue an unequivocal statement.

[Gur-Arye] Is there an understanding between Israel and the United States that the United States can promise on behalf of Israel that there will be no more deportations of Palestinians?

[Rabinovich] No. Here I can be very undiplomatic in the sense that I can give you a very clear-cut answer, and the answer is no. I know that there were some publications in the press to that effect, but they are unfounded. Those who listened to the prime minister speaking together with Secretary Christopher during the secretary's visit to Jerusalem could have heard the prime minister use the terms exception and unprecedented with regard to the December action, but this is the extent of what has been said and will be said, and the United States is not in a position to promise anything, and I am quite certain that it has not promised anything beyond this. [end recording]

EC Proposes Infrastructure Plans for Mid-East Peace

TA2803071293 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 28 Mar 93

[Text] The EC is already looking to peace in the Middle East. The EC is proposing that planning should begin now for an international highway that would run from Egypt to Turkey through Israel and joining up to her existing coastal road. The proposal also speaks of a single electric power grid for Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, and Israel. Community experts say that the plan could save the countries concerned about $6 billion.

Qol Yisra'el's political affairs correspondent says the ideas were raised during a visit last week of EC representatives preparing for the arrival here of the foreign ministers of Britain, Denmark, and Belgium for talks on the future of the Middle East.

Latvian Minister Seeks Aid To Set Up Police Force

TA2903063593 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 29 Mar 93

[Excerpts] Police Minister Moshe Shahal has told visiting Latvian Interior Minister Ziedonis Cevers Israel is deeply concerned by the ceremonies held in Latvia to commemorate the founding of the Latvian legion of the Wafen SS. Cevers replied that Latvia is not proud of that chapter in its history, and assured Shahal that any attacks on ethnic minorities in Latvia will be rigorously punished. [passage omitted]

Cevers is also meeting Israel's Interior Minister Arye Der'i, and the Foreign Ministry Director General Yosef Hadas. Latvia is seeking Israeli aid in the organization of its police force for the war on crime. [passage omitted]

Netanyahu Victory May 'Propel' Rabin Toward Peace

TA3003112893 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 30 Mar 93 p B1

[Commentary by Yo'el Marcus: "The Great White Hope"]

[Text] Readers might break out in laughter, but I mean every word: Binyamin Netanyahu is now Israel's Great White Hope. Why? Because he threatens Yitzhaq Rabin and his party. The more he threatens them, the better the chances that they will start to move and do something about all their promises, especially concerning peace.

Bibi is our Great White Hope for yet another reason: He might bring the Americans to push the Arabs, or the Arabs to push the Americans, into not missing the opportunity presented by the Rabin government, because it is now or never. If Rabin leaves the scene, the reins will go to Bibi, who talks about war against terrorism. He talks about war on the Golan Heights and the West Bank. Only two words have almost never been heard in any public appearance or speech. We have not heard him mention the peace process. On the contrary: Knesset Member Tzahi Hanegbi, Bibi's right-hand man in the Likud primaries, explained on television that Bibi supports the idea of Greater Israel. Bibi does not believe that the Arabs want peace. Many Jews also do not believe the Arabs, and the more Jews who get killed, the fewer there will be who believe the Arabs and the more who believe Bibi. His victory is like sticking chili peppers up Rabin's you-know-what. If that does not move him, nothing will.

Through the 1.7 million words written, broadcast, presented, and sung about "the significance of Bibi's election," there has been a single thread: Bibi will not become prime minister. He has been compared to a meteor which explodes once it reaches the atmosphere even before hitting the ground. Everybody knows that the atmosphere in the Likud is very dense and that not only meteors but also stationary objects get burnt out there. This theory is based on the assumption that Likud activists from all camps find it hard to swallow Netanyahu's victory. Some have had their pride hurt, and some have been defeated. Quite a few will conduct a war of attrition against him inside the party. Many are sure that by the time the next general elections come around, there will be nothing left of him except star dust.

In my view, the reports about Bibi's downfall are premature. Were I a Likud activist, I would not dismiss him and I definitely would not say he is finished. The general opinion is that he is shallow and superficial, and that cannot be completely refuted. He is neither Marx nor Engels, neither Berl Katznelson [Zionist ideologue] nor even Ze'ev Jabotinsky. But let us be truthful: How many ideologues with high brows and deep thoughts do we have running around these days in the leaderships of the political parties? He is first and foremost a great salesman and, being blessed with the gift of charisma—a fact which is undisputed—he chiefly markets himself. Second, he is a

very calculating and methodical person. Nevertheless, he must have some special talent to be able to jump straight from being a furniture salesman to head of the Likud and candidate for prime minister. I would not dismiss somebody who started where he did and has come so far, while skipping over all those heads and institutions, through direct contact with the voter. There are very few politicians in our midst who have that ability. None of them has done what Bibi has managed to do.

Nothing succeeds like success, especially when his main asset is his claim that "we will return to power only with me as leader." That motto worked wonders for Rabin in the Labor primaries and in the elections to the 13th Knesset. There is no reason why it should not work for Bibi, too. He is more telegenic, a better orator, more of a demagogue, and younger than Yitzhaq Rabin or any of those around him. On a one-to-one basis, Rabin cannot afford to be lackadaisical.

We have entered a new era in which only those who can win triumph in the first stage. But, in the second stage, the victor will be somebody who not only wins, but who can also succeed at his task. The public is not totally stupid, despite what politicians think. Since Rabin is the first to win the primaries with the motto that only he can bring victory, only he—not David Levi or Beni Begin—can stop Bibi. He can do that by proving that he succeeded not only in getting elected but also in doing his job. The more Rabin succeeds, the more Bibi's meteoric rise will be halted.

Bibi's entry into the arena brings a spirit of change into the political system, especially in Labor "under Rabin," which might be starting to understand that it does not have all the time in the world. It must make haste. It must convince the Arabs to make haste. It must propel the United States into making haste. If that will be the outcome of what has happened in the Likud, we will be able to say that Bibi's victory was not in vain.

Likud Leader Urges Opposition To Oust Government

TA2903184993 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1800 GMT 29 Mar 93

[Excerpts] Knesset Member [MK] Binyamin Netanyahu met today with leaders of four opposition parties: Tzomet, the National Religious Party [NRP], Agudat Yisra'el, and Moledet. The five discussed the formation of a common front that will oppose the policies of the Labor-led coalition and will try to bring down the government. Le'a Zinder reports:

[Begin recording] [Zinder] Following today's meeting in Tel Aviv this afternoon, MK Binyamin Netanyahu said that the opposition will be coordinating their activities both in the Knesset and in the public arena. Their goal, he said, was clear.

[Netanyahu] Our intention is to bring down the government as quickly as we can, certainly no later than—before, I should say, 1996. In the meantime, we will start a vigorous campaign of an active opposition to protest the failures of the government's policy and to suggest a viable alternative for the Israeli public that is crying for a change. [passage omitted]

[Zinder] Of the four other party leaders present, Moledet head, Rehav'am Ze'evi, appeared the most enthusiastic about the prospect of a united opposition front. The other three were more circumspect.

Agudat Yisra'el's Avraham Shapira said he would have to obtain the approval of Agudat Yisra'el's Council of Torah Sages before he could join such a common front. Tzomet's Refa'el Eytan said it was early to talk about Binyamin Netanyahu as the next prime minister. And the NRP's Zvulun Hammer said that while Labor has for the moment lost interest in having his party join the government, that could change.

[Hammer] If it will change, maybe it will be a unity government with Likud, too. We shall see. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Rabin Allows Coalition Contacts With Religious Party

TA2803100993 Tel Aviv HADASHOT in Hebrew 28 Mar 93 p 1

[Report by Gid'on Sa'ar]

[Text] Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres is holding intensive contacts with Knesset members from Agudat Yisra'el [AY] [a United Torah Jewry component] in a bid to persuade them to join the coalition. Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin had authorized Peres to conduct the contacts with AY.

It has been learned that the talks aim to persuade AY to join the coalition or, alternatively, to secure its support for the coalition from the outside in return for a series of understandings with the Labor party.

HADASHOT has learned that the AY's demands include budgets for its education system, as well as a termination of the efforts to pass the human rights basic law.

Another reason for the contacts with AY was the argument voiced by Labor figures that Minister Arye Der'i no longer controls SHAS [Torah Observing Sephardim].

'Secret' House Session Discusses Peace Talks

JN3003093193 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 30 Mar 93 pp 28, 22

[Text] The House of Representatives held a secret session yesterday evening under Speaker Dr. 'Abd-al-Latif 'Arabiyat. The session, which lasted for more than four hours, was attended by Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir, as well as by cabinet ministers.

AL-DUSTUR has learned that the session was frank and that the executive and legislative branches exchanged views as part of the existing cooperation between them.

Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir delivered a detailed statement on the peace process since its start in November 1991 in Madrid and up until the preparatory conference of the foreign ministers of the cordon states now being held in Syria.

The prime minister asserted that Jordan is continuing coordination with the Arab states concerned with peace, and with the PLO, to achieve a just, lasting, and honorable peace. He added that Jordan will not accept any partial solution to the Arab-Israeli problem.

The prime minister also reaffirmed that Jordan has so far not agreed to the items on the proposed agenda with Israel, and that it is still under study. No specific agenda has been agreed on in this regard, he said.

Regarding the issue of the Islamic Mobilization [Youth Organization], in which deputies Layth Shubaylat and Ya'qub Qirrish were indicted, Interior Minister Jawdat al-Subul delivered a detailed statement on the case, affirming the constitutionality of the State Security Court, which is authorized to handle such cases. He noted that a royal amnesty was issued and that the crime was completely deleted.

Deputy Layth Shubaylat also made a lengthy statement on his arrest and trial, pointing out that his travel to Iran was to approximate views between the Iranian and Iraqi governments, and that he met with the Iraqi opposition in Iran to enlist their support for the Iraqi Government prior to the start of the Gulf war. He supported his statement with some documents.

Deputy Shubaylat quarreled with several members over statements attributed to him by a British newspaper to the effect that the House of Representatives did not support him while he was on trial. The deputies explained that a parliamentary committee was formed to follow up on the issue. The speaker and several other members also said that no one is allowed to tongue lash the speakership or the House of Representatives, and that the follow-up committee was not "lax", as one of the deputies characterized it.

Several deputies raised the issue of Jordanian citizens jailed in Egypt and Syria. Interior Minister Jawdat al-Subul pointed out that he met with his Egyptian counterpart in Tunis recently, who promised to study the subject and asked him to let the Jordanian ambassador remind him of this.

The interior minister added that the Egyptian authorities acquitted five Jordanians who had been jailed for a long time, but then returned them to prison in accordance with the martial law still in place in Egypt.

With regard to the dozens of Jordanian prisoners in Syria, al- Subul said that contacts with Syrian officials are still continuing to secure their release.

The session began at four in the afternoon in public. The speaker, however, noted the government's desire to hold a secret session. Deputies debated whether the session would be open or secret, until a majority of 45 out of 60 deputies who attended voted in favor of a motion to hold a secret session.

Delegation To Visit Washington To Discuss Talks

JN3003075793 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 30 Mar 93 p 1

[By JORDAN TIMES staff reporter]

[Text] Amman—A small Jordanian delegation headed by Dr 'Abd-al-Salam al-Majali, chief Jordanian negotiator in peace talks with Israel, is expected to leave for Washington soon for talks with U.S. officials on ways to end the stalemate in the Middle East peace process.

While no final decision appears to have been taken on the composition of the delegation and its mission, informed sources expected the objective of the trip would be to complement other Arab efforts to prepare the grounds for the next round of Arab-Israeli peace talks in Washington.

Such efforts will be spearheaded by Egyptian President Husni Mubarak who is scheduled to meet with U.S. President Bill Clinton April 6.

According to well-informed sources, the delegation's talks, which come in parallel to similar missions by the Palestinians and Syrians, will focus on how to remove the obstacles in resuming Arab-Israeli peace talks.

A meeting of the Arab parties involved in the peace talks—Syria, Lebanon, the Palestinians and Jordan—ended in Damascus Monday with a decision to defer Arab response in the American-Russian invitation to resume the negotiations in Washington April 20.

Dr. al-Majali, who attended the Damascus meeting along with Foreign Minister Kamil Abu-Jabir, told Jordan Television:

"The Arab foreign ministers (meeting in Damascus) were not fully convinced and so they did not respond to the invitation that came from the co-sponsors of the peace process (the U.S. and Russia) to resume the ninth round of (bilateral Arab-Israeli) peace talks in Washington."

"Numerous questions still remain and the Arab foreign ministers are still awaiting answers and clear signs so that they can be sure of their right decision at the right moment," Dr al-Majali said.

Mr. Mubarak "will be carrying many questions to the U.S. administration, expecting answers," Dr. al-Majali said.

Call for Confronting Return of 'Old Colonialism'

JN2903121093 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 29 Mar 93 pp 1, 21

[Editorial: "Return of Old Colonialism"]

[Text] In the face of the end of the cold war, the unilateral U.S. hegemony, and the birth of the so-called new world order, it seems that the world is leading its peoples and nations toward forming a new order and to confront the U.S. hegemony without regular armies and political decisions. The objective of this effort by these peoples and nations is to repulse the injustice done to them, confront the contempt with which the new world order treats them, and form a daring popular force that does not care about the technological progress in armament, all the Western arsenals, and the huge funds allocated to build the U.S. and European armed forces that are tasked with restoring the old colonialism and redividing the world among these hateful colonialist powers.

We are proud of what is going on everywhere in Palestine, and we believe that this is the only remaining solution to deal with the Zionist arrogance and to defeat it, and to deal with the United States and inflict harm and humiliation upon it. Any move toward peace by the Palestinians in particular and by all other Arabs is met by open provocation and humiliating contempt. Therefore, what is left for the Palestinian people, in addition to the faith in their hearts, is the fist, the knife, the decision to become martyrs, and the rifle with which they confront and defeat racism.

The victories of the peoples and nations over the Western colonialism were only realized in the arena of popular confrontation. The Vietnamese people's victory over their enemies, and the Americans in particular, is still alive in the memory of humanity, and is still a nightmare in every American house despite Washington's allegations that its military victory over the Iraqi people swept away its military, political, and moral defeat in Vietnam. The Palestinian people have grasped the most important lessons of their long struggle. These are demonstrated now in their implementation of the decision to carry out jihad on their national soil, and to turn the land of Palestine into a hell for every Israeli, and a nightmare that defeats the dreams and illusions of the Hebrew state, which led it to believe that it has achieved total victory and stability, and that it has entirely succeeded to defeat our great Arab nation.

The Palestinians and all the angry and oppressed people in our Arab and Islamic worlds and all over the world are now making their sound decision. In face of the return of the old colonialism, ways of confronting it should also be restored. In such a confrontation, the personal weapons, warplanes, Patriot missiles, alliances, and siege turn into ashes that cannot withstand the decision of a mujahid who decides to offer his soul for his homeland, and to sacrifice his blood in the hope of a new dawn. We have to follow up this heroic Palestinian scene in order to understand the extent of the Zionist panic which cannot be eliminated by military superiority, armies, bases, and aircraft carriers.

Al-Rantisi Urges Arabs To Reject Talks Resumption

NC2803134593 Shanayh Voice of the Mountain in Arabic 1130 GMT 28 Mar 93

[Text] Palestinian deportees spokesman Dr. 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Rantisi has appealed to Arab foreign ministers not to give the occupation authorities the opportunity to tamper with the Palestinian people's fate as they please. He expressed the hope that the Arab foreign ministers will convey to these authorities a clear rejection of the resumption of the talks unless the deportees go back.

At a news conference today, he said: We must emphasize that we came in one group and should return in one group. We refuse outright the phased repatriation proposed in the conspiratorial U.S.-Zionist deal and Dr. Haydar 'Abd-al-Shafi [head of the Palestinian delegation] must realize this when he makes a statement. He added: We have not asked the Palestinian delegation to talk in our name and we adhere only to resolutions issued inside the camp. The Palestinian delegation does not represent me and we have no hopes in their overt or covert agreements.

Al-Rantisi went on: We fully realize that had there been any agreement to return to the negotiating table, President Hafiz al- Asad would have announced this. As we heard today, he did not announce this and said that the deportees issue must be resolved first.

Al-Rantisi said: The United States has been circumventing Resolution 799 ever since the U.S.-Zionist deal contradicting this resolution was announced. This is the new world order, which backs the Zionist injustice, terrorism, and corruption in Palestine at the expense of the aggrieved Palestinian people's rights.

Arabs Urged To Strike 'Balance of Power' With Israel

NC2603205693 Beirut AL-DIYAR in Arabic 20 Mar 93 p 2

[From "AL-DIYAR's Torch" column by Muwaffaq Madani: "The Arab World Between Two Fires"]

[Excerpts] In the words of the thinker Munah al-Sulh, the Arab world's threefold tragedy is that it is rich in money, richer in population, but unable to confront its fateful issues and assume an appropriate international status. The world does not like to see the Arabs like this. Their friends do not accept it and their enemies despise them for it.

Nations are measured by their ability to confront challenges, especially those connected with the homeland's defense, that is waging a just war. This is especially true when a nation's territory is usurped—which is the situation as far as Israel is concerned—or its natural resources are threatened, as is the case for the neighboring countries. No logic can deprive a nation of the right to defend its national security.

The Arabs have failed the test of defending their national security. This is why they now face ruin at home, as illustrated by their inter-regime wars, battles between government and opposition, and sectarian, denominational, and ethnic wars. [passage omitted]

It is not realistic to expect the Arabs to be without the capability to maintain a military and strategic balance that would safeguard their status and guarantee their security. Such is the case with India, which has the capability to manufacture atomic bombs and has bombs in hand; Pakistan, which also has the bomb; and Iran, which keeps the world obsessed with its Islamic revolution and its quest for atomic armament.

Look at Fidel Castro in Cuba at the head of a communist regime that has lost its greater leadership in the former Soviet Union and wages a struggle of existence and defiance just a short way from the great U.S. empire.

Such is the case with China, which has resisted a fate similar to the Soviet Union's. Such is the case with North Korea and other countries and nations that have not surrendered, despaired, or been struck off the list of effective countries. These fear-inspiring countries are nominated to play major roles in every sphere in the new world. [passage omitted]

Must we wait for the United States and Israel to drag us into the separate peace settlements that are being offered to us to make us abandon our primary cause, the Palestinian issue, and consequently relinquish our legitimate right to our occupied territories and hand them over to the Israelis?

Recognizing Israel means conceding our right not to recognize it or strike a balance of power with it. Refusal to recognize it was not an erroneous Arab policy. It was the only sound Arab policy, because it balanced the Arab boycott of Israel against Israel's Western-backed military and political superiority.

In exchange for what must we abandon our rights and recognize Israel? In return for acknowledging its mastery over the land and the displacement of 4 million Palestinians? Must we hand the reins of our future, our fate, to Israel after paving the way for such overlordship by allowing dictators to rule over us and efface our human rights? Must we hand our future to it through our sectarian, denominational, and ethnic conflicts or our military impotence and inability to join the third technological revolution? [passage omitted]

Fadlallah on Avoiding 'Concessions' in Settlement

NC2703074393 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 27 Mar 93

[Text] Ayatollah Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah has denounced the U.S. policy towards the region, which is pressuring the Arab countries and the Palestinians not to

link the Palestinian deportees issue with the negotiations. He said that the United States is still insisting that this issue should not be raised.

His eminence called on the Arabs and Palestinians to take a united stand and to confront the plots being hatched against this nation. He said:

[Begin Fadlallah recording] The deportees issue is linked to the entire Palestinian issue. We feel that the Palestinians have entered this settlement ploy and that they will attend the negotiations without a solution to the deportees issue because the Palestinians believe that the negotiations are the way to obtain their rights. But we tell them that anyone whose policy is to make concessions will end up being asked to concede everything. A person who sheds off his garments piece by piece before the enemy as a result of pressure will end up completely naked with nothing to cover him. [end recording]

Defense Minister Rules Out Joint Committees With Israel

NC2803133693 Shanayh Voice of the Mountain in Arabic 1130 GMT 28 Mar 93

[Text] Defense Minister Muhsin Dallul has noted that it has been announced that the United States will play the role of a more active partner in the peace talks but this is not evident yet.

He said that the Lebanese stand on the deportees issue has been firm. He added that the formation of committees to discuss any issue with Israel before withdrawal from the occupied strip is out of question. He pointed out that Lebanon is continuing its efforts to deploy its legitimate forces in the areas under the control of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon.

Al-Hariri Notes 'Defective' Implementation of al-Ta'if

NC2903170393 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 1545 GMT 29 Mar 93

[Text] Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri has said that there will be no more wars in Lebanon, and that the process of reconstruction and development has begun and no one can stop it. Noting that the al-Ta'if accord is a major development in Lebanon's life, he said the implementation of the accord in the past three years has been defective, causing political, economic, and social crises.

Al-Hariri told a delegation of Kasrawan figures that the Lebanese are determined to coexist in a free, sovereign, and democratic country ruled by law and characterized by justice and equality. The government is determined not to move backward, and, in addition to the policy of construction and security, it is now concentrating on genuine national reconciliation and on equality among the people, al-Hariri said. He said the situation is not as bad as the pessimists imagine, nor as good as the optimists imagine, and it can be improved.

Amal's Qabalan: Resistance To Form 'All-Out Confrontation'

NC2703083493 (Clandestine) Voice of the South in Arabic to Lebanon 0800 GMT 27 Mar 93

[Text] Ja'farite Mufti 'Abd-al-Amir Qabalan [chairman of the Amal Movement's Islamic Jurisprudence Committee] has pointed out that the resistance is going to turn into an all-out confrontation against the Israeli forces. He said that the resistance men will follow the same methods the population of Gaza Strip and the West Bank are using against the Israelis.

Qabalan called for reconstructing all Lebanese areas, particularly those in the south. He said that it would be unfair if only certain areas benefited from the reconstruction process.

Further Reportage on Area Violence

Israeli Shelling Kills 1

NC2703122093 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1130 GMT 27 Mar 93

[Text] The Israeli occupation forces and their agents bombarded the liberated areas today. Israeli tanks in Jabal Safi and Buslayya in Iqlim al-Tuffah shelled the towns of Kafr Milki and Kafr Hatta, injuring six people and causing extensive damage to buildings and property. Our correspondent said that the Lebanese Army returned fire using tanks.

Meanwhile, resistance men detonated an explosive charge today by remote control under a passing car in Saydun. Six agents were injured and taken to Jazzin Hospital.

[Paris AFP in English at 1135 GMT on 27 March reports: "A Lebanese woman was killed and five others wounded early Saturday when the Israeli Army or its proxy South Lebanese Army (SLA) shelled villages where Shiite militiamen are positioned, police said.

["The shelling targeted the villages of Kafr Milki and Kafr Matta [as received] east of Sidon in southern Lebanon where the pro-Iranian Hizballah militia are entrenched. Earlier, a bomb exploded as an SLA patrol passed near Suwaydah, a position held jointly by the SLA and Israeli Army inside Israel's self-proclaimed 'security zone', security sources in the region said.

["They did not report any casualties but said the blast was the work of Lebanese anti-Israeli guerrillas from the Communist Party."]

One Killed, Another Wounded in Jazzin

NC2703150693 (Clandestine) Voice of the South in Arabic to Lebanon 1430 GMT 27 Mar 93

[Text] A South Lebanese Army [SLA] soldier was killed at noon today when fire from automatic weapons and mortar shells were directed at an SLA post near Jazzin.

Another SLA soldier was wounded when a roadside bomb exploded as an SLA patrol passed through Jazzin. The SLA returned the fire.

Fatah, Fundamentalists Clash

NC2903163893 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 1545 GMT 29 Mar 93

[Text] A clash between Fatah supporters led by Munir l-Maqdah and Palestinian fundamentalists loyal to Shaykh Hisham al-Shuraydah took place in the 'Ayn al-Hulwah camp in Sidon today.

Deportees' Spokesman Marks 101st Day of Expulsion

NC2703182993 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 27 Mar 93

[Text] To mark the 101st day since the Palestinians were expelled to southern Lebanon, the deportees' spokesman, Dr. 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Rantisi, held a news conference in which he talked about the Palestinian delegation's meeting with a number of U.S. officials.

He emphasized that the Palestinians are suffering a great deal and that those who carried out this deportation will pay a high price. He said they have not authorized anyone to speak on their behalf and will accept nothing short of implementing Resolution 799.

He stressed that the Syrian and Egyptian presidents are more aware more of their plight than others, and that it is these two presidents who will work to implement Resolution 799.

Foreign Minister Buwayz Returns From Damascus

NC2903193293 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1900 GMT 29 Mar 93

[Text] Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz returned to Beirut from Damascus this afternoon after attending the two-day meetings of the foreign ministers of the Arab countries involved in the peace process.

Al-Hirawi, Delegation Depart for Kuwait

NC3003054793 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0430 GMT 30 Mar 93

[Text] President Ilyas al-Hirawi left this morning for Kuwait on the first leg of his tour of a number of Gulf states. He is accompanied by Defense Minister Muhsin Dallul, Information Minister Michel Samahah, and Butrus Labaki, deputy chairman of the Development and Reconstruction Council. President al-Hirawi will discuss the possibility of extending aid to help with reconstruction, reconciliation, and peace in Lebanon with Gulf officials.

Vatican's Foreign Minister Arrives, Meets Buwayz

NC2703183893 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 27 Mar 93

[Excerpt] The Vatican's secretary for relations with states, Jean Louis Tauran, accompanied by Monsignor (Gatti), arrived in Beirut at 1800 today. He was received at the airport by Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz; Papal Nuncio Pablo Puente; Bishop Bulus Matar, who represented Patriarch Sfayr; Deputy Fu'ad al-Sa'd; and Foreign Ministry Protocol Director Riyad al-Quntar.

Upon his arrival, Tauran met with his Lebanese counterpart, Faris Buwayz. The two men will go to the temporary presidential office, where they are expected to meet with President Ilyas al-Hirawi at 1930. [passage omitted]

Al-Hariri Meets Vatican Envoy

NC2903095893 Shanayh Voice of the Mountain in Arabic 0900 GMT 29 Mar 93

[Text] Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri, who has returned from Paris via Damascus, this morning received Jean Louis Tauran, Vatican secretary for relations with states, and discussed with him Lebanese developments and the Vatican's role in supporting Lebanon on all levels.

After the meeting, Tauran said: We discussed with Prime Minister al-Hariri regional peace and the chances and challenges facing the peace process. We also discussed the process of normalization in Lebanon in terms of the material, national, and moral rebuilding. His holiness the pope regards this stage in Lebanon's life as very important, he added, and we think all groups in society must participate in the new project and there must be no turning back. Lebanon must project a new image, including its constant adherence to freedom and pluralism.

Al-Hariri held several meetings in Damascus on the preliminary results of the Syrian-Egyptian summit and the meetings of the foreign ministers of Arab states concerned with the peace negotiations, as well as bilateral issues.

Commenting on the outcome of the French elections, Prime Minister al-Hariri today said: Lebanese-French relations are relations between states; they are not affected by changes of governments. The elections are an internal affair of the French people. Lebanon has friends in the various French political circles, irrespective of party affiliations.

Congolese Foreign Minister Holds Talks

NC3003064793 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1400 GMT 26 Mar 93

[Text] Congolese Foreign Minister Benjamin Bounkoulou continued his meetings with Lebanese officials today. This morning he handed President Ilyas al-Hirawi a message from the Congolese president. Bounkoulou

said it is a message of friendship and encourages efforts to achieve solutions in the region. The Congolese foreign minister expressed his satisfaction with the contribution of the Lebanese community to economic development in the Congo.

Bounkoulou also met with Deputy Prime Minister Michel al-Murr and discussed ways to strengthen bilateral relations on various political and economic levels. Al-Murr explained that the talks dealt with the Lebanese community in the Congo, adding that the talks were positive and showed a desire to strengthen and expand relations.

Al-Murr contacted Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri in Paris and briefed him on the outcome of his talks with the Congolese foreign minister.

Bounkoulou visited the Foreign Ministry a second time, resuming his talks with Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz at a working luncheon, which was also attended by senior Foreign Ministry officials.

The Congolese foreign minister will call on Chamber of Deputies Speaker Nabih Birri at his house in al-Musaylih tomorrow at noon.

[Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic at 0515 GMT on 30 March adds the following: "Congolese Foreign Minister Benjamin Bounkoulou described his talks with Lebanese officials as positive and fruitful. He said that he addressed an official invitation to Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz to visit the Congo.

"Bounkoulou left Beirut this morning for home."]

French Helicopter Deal Linked With Financial Protocol

NC3003071893 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0515 GMT 30 Mar 93

[Text] The Defense Ministry has delivered the files and documents on the French Puma helicopter deal to Elie al-Firzali, the deputy speaker of the Chamber of Deputies and the chairman of the parliamentary committee investigating the purchase of the aircraft.

According to exclusive information, the delay in investigating the affair was due to an urgent message conveyed two months ago by French Ambassador Daniel Husson. The message expressed a French wish that the opening of the file be postponed until after the French elections, because the deal might affect a number of officials in the French Socialist Party. According to our information, Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri intervened with the pertinent bodies in Lebanon to postpone the opening of the file in accordance with this wish. In return, Lebanon expressed the wish that the signing of the bilateral financial protocol be sped up. Consequently, contacts were held between the two countries; the opening of the file on the Puma deal was postponed and the signing of the protocol was sped up.

U.S. Urged To Play 'Forceful' Role in Mideast Peace Process

JN3003090193 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 30 Mar 93

[Press review]

[Text] AL-BA'TH writes that the Arabs are giving the cosponsors of the Middle East peace talks time to underline their commitment to the peace initiative predicated on the land-for-peace formula. AL-BA'TH editorial continues: In the concluding statement of the Damascus talks, the Arab parties emphasized their willingness to pursue peace efforts subject to the United States shouldering its full responsibility toward the peace process and UN resolutions rather than being a full partner to Israel's aggressive plans. The Damascus interlocuters obviously failed to be impressed by the U.S. treatment of Rabin, and were surprised by the American inconsistency of telling the Arabs one thing and the Israelis another. For the Arab parties to the Washington talks, AL-BA'TH stressed, the talks still constitute an opportunity to fashion a just and permanent peace, provided certain nations with the muscle to get UN resolutions implemented stay away from ambiguity, and the international community ceases to be a spineless player manipulated by Israel.

The Arabs have waited long enough, but they will never relinquish their rights nor their adherance to the land-for-peace principle. One and a half years since the Madrid conference got underway, the situation continues to worsen and Israeli officials continue their antipeace rhetoric; the Arabs, however, have left the door open not only for Israel but also for the cosponsors of the peace conference. By spurning the land-for-peace formula, Israel, effectively, rejects peace, AL-BA'TH concludes.

TISHRIN argues that the Damascus talks have left the Arab countries engaged in the peace process united on the question of the peace process and have put the record straight on many matters that have troubled the countries of the region. The paper notes the Arab foreign ministers' warning of the potentially catastrophic worsening situation in the occupied Arab territories and Israeli rulers' defiance of UN Security Council resolutions, including Resolution 799 demanding the immediate repatriation of the deportees. The world, which had been looking to the United States to bring real pressure to bear on Israel over the deportee issue—where human rights and the Geneva Convention have been grossly violated—was let down by the Christopher-Rabin deal that amounted to a circumvention of Resolution 799. Then came Rabin's U.S. visit and the strategic partnership to sow more doubts. The U.S.-Israeli strategic partnership, TISHRIN adds, has prompted the Arab foreign ministers to question how the U.S. commitment to the role of full, effective partner in the peace process may fit in with this strategic partnership. Against the backdrop of a combination of the deportee issue and the worsening situation in the occupied Arab territories, the Arabs have had to wait for clarifications from the U.S. Administration about its concept of the full partner role and where it stands on the deportee issue before deciding whether to join the ninth round of the Middle East peace talks. TISHRIN said in conclusion: The Arabs want true peace and a comprehensive settlement involving all fronts and all parties; although Syria and all the Arabs have made their desire for full peace known, not a word has been uttered by Israel to indicate its readiness to effect a complete withdrawal in return for peace. Hence, the Arab foreign ministers' decision to leave their session open, pending clarifications from the conference cosponsors, and their argument that a less than total peace will be doomed.

Discussing the same subject, AL-THAWRAH writes that peacemaking is an indivisible whole, and the kind of peace we are after is one that meets the criteria of justice and universality. The Damascus coordinative session has once again brought into focus the vitality of a comprehensive settlement and rejecting Israeli dictates and obstructionism and separate deals. The Arabs have thus once again demonstrated that they have never been obstructionists and that for the peace process to take off and advance to its destination, Israel will have to cease to be intransigent and antipeace, and the United States will have to play such a forceful and influential role that will persuade Israel to stay away from negativeness, procrastination, and foot-dragging, concludes AL-THAWRAH.

Afghanistan

Golboddin To Announce Composition of Cabinet 30 Mar

LD2903184893 Tehran IRNA in English 1812 GMT 29 Mar 93

[Text] Kabul, March 29, IRNA—Afghan Prime Minister Golboddin Hekmatyar said here today that by midday tomorrow he would announce the list of his cabinet.

In his interview with Iranian reporters he said that he has almost concluded his consultations with representatives of the jihadi parties for the formation of the cabinet.

He said in the wake of the assembly in Jalalabad the previous cabinet was to be disbanded, but that this was not done in the interest of talks and as a gesture of good intentions.

The Monday meeting was held at the headquarters of the Islamic Party in Chahar Assiab, 20 kilometers southeast of Kabul.

Rabbani Hopes for Agreement

LD2803175893 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1430 GMT 28 Mar 93

[Text] Esteemed Professor Borhanoddin Rabbani, president of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, has expressed the hope that at the meeting of leaders or representatives of jihadi organizations, which is due to be held tomorrow, an agreement will be reached on the formation of the cabinet and the prime minister will present the proposed cabinet to the president.

In an exclusive interview with a BAKHTAR correspondent President Rabbani said: Although some leaders of the jihadi organizations will not be able to attend tomorrow's session, the main aim is the agreement of all organizations on the implementation of the provisions of the Islamabad accord and the formation of the cabinet. I hope that the prime minister will be able to present the agreement of all organizations on the formation of the cabinet to the president.

Esteemed Professor Rabbani added: If the planned session is held tomorrow, Esteemed Sayed Nurollah Emad and Esteemed Engineer Mohammad Eshaq will attend the session as representatives of the Jamiat-e Eslami [Islamic Society].

Answering a question about the position of the Ministry of Defense, the president said: Unfortunately this issue has not been represented correctly by the mass media. Because at the moment the aim of all is to ensure security and stability in the country, especially in Kabul, this question is deemed a necessity. Esteemed Prime Minister Golboddin Hekmatyar will also take this into account in order to ensure the expediency of his government and succeed in achieving peace and stability.

President Rabbani stated: Until a new cabinet is formed, ministers and responsible officials of ministries will continue their work. The president said the formation of a new cabinet is a result of the agreements which were reached in Islamabad. If for some reason the formation of the cabinet is delayed, it will by no means have a negative impact on peace in the country, or in Kabul in particular. The basis of the work is the peace accord, on which all organization leaders have reached an agreement. A delay in the formation of a cabinet should not create any feeling of despair over the stability of the situation. It is not only all jihadi organizations that have resolved that peace will last in the country; the Islamic Conference Organization and our other friends have decided to supervise peace in our country, at the request of the jihadi leaders. This alone is considered a new dimension in the restoration of peace and the ensuring of stability in the country.

In an interview with a BAKHTAR correspondent today, esteemed Sayd Nurollah Emad expressed his views on the planned session of the leaders and representatives of the jihadi organizations. He stated: The meeting will be held tomorrow, otherwise work will be conducted on the formation of the cabinet [sentence as heard]. The organizations have already communicated their views to the prime minister. He said that basically the work on the formation of the cabinet has not been delayed, but visits by the leaders to certain friendly countries and later on the New Year and 'Id al-Fitr holidays led to work being delayed on this issue. On the other hand the session of all organization leaders for the formation of the cabinet is not at issue as a principle necessity. The organizations' views have already been submitted to the prime minister.

Esteemed Emad said: All mojahedin organizations and their leaders are determined to take due steps for the tranquillity of the nation and for the restoration of peace. God willing, very soon the cabinet will be formed and will start work.

Faction Leaders To Meet on Cabinet

BK2903125693 Hong Kong AFP in English 1112 GMT 29 Mar 93

[By Terence White]

[Excerpt] Kabul, March 29 (AFP)—Afghan mojahedin groups were to gather in a village south of here Monday [29 March] to select a new cabinet but the tense negotiations looked doomed to fail with few faction leaders attending.

Golboddin Hekmatyar, the radical Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party] leader chosen as prime minister-designate, called the meeting at his headquarters at Charasiab to share out cabinet positions among the rival Afghan factions.

But few faction leaders were expected to join in the talks chaired by Hekmatyar as five of the nine chiefs are

currently outside Afghanistan, a point the Hezb leader's rivals immediately said signalled his failure as prime minister.

Under a pact signed by the factions in Islamabad earlier this month, Hekmatyar is to head a cabinet made up of members of all the groups who fought the 14-year war to oust the former communist regime.

But no agreement has been reached on the key post of defence minister, currently occupied by Hekmatyar's main rival, Ahmad Shah Mas'ud, who belongs to the same faction as President Borhanoddin Rabbani.

Hekmatyar is insisting that no faction be allowed to occupy more than one of the key government positions.

A spokesman from Rabbani's Jami'at-e Eslami [Islamic Society] faction said here that there was little chance of success for the meeting, which follows a failed attempt to select a new government earlier this month in the eastern city of Jalalabad.

"The government has declared its readiness to send its representatives to this meeting, but since so many leaders are out of the country, the probability of it convening is slight," spokesman Yunus Qanooni said.

Despite Hekmatyar's insistence at the Jalalabad meeting that faction leaders attend the next round of talks in person, it was expected that only their representatives would travel to Charasiab, an oasis village about 25 kilometres (15 miles) south of Kabul.

Qanooni said the representatives would not have any power to sign an agreement but would simply inform their leaders of the details of the talks.

The Jami'at official underscored the rivalry between the president and Hekmatyar by emphasising the Hezb leader's failure to organise a gathering of mojahedin leaders.

"Non-attendance by the leaders at this meeting is a sign of Hekmatyar's failure in his job as prime minister," he said, while the presidential spokesman questioned the Hezb leader right to even call the meeting.

"I think a gathering of leaders should be called by the president," said Abdol Aziz Morad. [passage omitted on history of Afghan conflict]

Rabbani Talks With Hekmatyar

LD2903184793 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 29 Mar 93

[Text] Esteemed Professor Borhanoddin Rabbani, president of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, received representatives of esteemed Golboddin Hekmatyar, the prime minister-designate. Esteemed Professor Abdurra'uf Rasul Sayyaf, leader of Ettehad-e Eslami [Islamic Union of Afghanistan], was present. Esteemed Professor Borhanoddin Rabbani had a comprehensive and friendly discussion with the delegation on the formation of the cabinet and a number of other issues. The delegation included Qazi Mohammad Amin Waqad, deputy leader of Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party of Afghanistan], esteemed Ali Ansari, and Engineer Asem [name indistinct]. The outcome of the discussion gives rise to hopes.

The press office of the presidency of Afghanistan told the BAKHTAR INFORMATION AGENCY that the jihadi leaders plan to hold a session today about the formation of a cabinet.

A meeting of five parties was held in Chaharasiab today. About today's session, Esteemed Nurollah Emad, representative of Jami'at-e Eslami [Islamic Society of Afghanistan], expressed his view in these words: Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami-e [Islamic Unity Party of Afghanistan], Jabha-ye Nejat-e Meli-ye [National Liberation Front of Afghanistan], Ettehad-e Eslami-e [Islamic Union of Afghanistan], and Harakat-e Eslami [Islamic Revolutionary Movement of Afghanistan] took part in the meeting. No organization leader participated in it.

He added: Talks will continued until the cabinet is formed. He said: We are optimistic about the outcome of our talks, and we hope that fruitful talks like these will soon result in the formation of a cabinet of Afghanistan.

The report adds that Esteemed Nurollah Emad handed over to the authorities of Hezb-e Eslami the 10 people who were with the Jami'at-e Eslami in order to foster an atmosphere of understanding and cooperation.

Rabbani Wants Mas'ud in Defense

LD2803122093 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 28 Mar 93

[Text] [Soleyman Seyyed Gilani] Afghan minister of state for foreign affairs, has named Ahmad Shah Mas'ud as the best person to head the country's Defense Ministry. He said this in an interview with the Voice and Vision correspondent in Kabul.

[Afghan President Borhannodin] Rabbani also believes that Mas'ud should retain the defense ministry. Rejecting the idea of giving just one key post to each party, Rabbani said that the distribution of ministries should be undertaken in view of the different groups' capabilities and the role they played in the country's 14-year-long jihad.

Hekmatyar 'Close' To Announcement

BK2903151893 Hong Kong AFP in English 1508 GMT 29 Mar 93

[Text] Charasiab, Afghanistan, March 29 (AFP)—Afghanistan's prime minister designate Golboddin Hekmatyar said Monday that he was close to announcing a new powersharing cabinet selected from the country's rival mojahedin factions.

"The good news today is that the formation of the cabinet is approximately completed," a beaming Hekmatyar told journalists at his base 25 kilometres (15 miles) south of Kabul.

"I hope to be able to send the cabinet list to the president tomorrow for the official announcement," added Hekmatyar, who was named prime minister-designate under an agreement reached earlier this month between the warring mujahedeen factions.

The leader of the Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party] faction said agreement had been reached among five of the groups who had sent representatives to this oasis town where the hardline Pashtun leader has been based since the mojahedin won control of Kabul last April.

A representative of a sixth faction and the leaders of two other were on their way here to approve the list, Hekmatyar said.

"I prefer to see them also, and then to finalise the cabinet," Hekmatyar said.

Only the Hezb-e Eslami splinter group led by Yunes Khales was not represented but Hekmatyar said he has received assurances that the faction would agree to his choices.

The main stumbling block to agreement on the new government has been the key post of defence minister, now held by Hekmatyar's arch rival Ahmad Shah Mas'ud. Hekmatyar has said he wants Mas'ud to give up the portfolio but gave no indication of what decision had been made.

No indication was given of any role in the government for the powerful Uzbek warlord Abdol Rashid Dostam.

Peace Commission Begins Supervision of Cease-Fire

LD2603182593 Tehran IRIB Television Second Program Network in English 1315 GMT 26 Mar 93

[Text] Members of the Afghanistan peace commission have been stationed in a city overlooking Kabul to implement a cease-fire in the city. Members of the commission include representatives of the Islamic Party [Hezb-e Eslami], Jami'at-e Eslami [Islamic Society], and the Islamic Unity Party [Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami].

Member of the Central Council of the Islamic Unity Party Mr. Mohaqqeq said the aggression which ruled the country in the past should not repeat in future.

Mr. Mohaqqeq referred to the casualties sustained by his party in clashes with other groups and said failing to reach an agreement in Islamabad would result in repeated war and bloodshed in Kabul.

Bangladesh

Antifundamentalist Demonstrators Clash With Police

BK2603132893 Hong Kong AFP in English 1242 GMT 26 Mar 93

[Text] Dhaka, March 26 (AFP) - Several thousand antifundamentalist demonstrators clashed with police who prevented them from holding a rally Friday, the 22nd anniversary of Bangladeshi independence, witnesses said.

A large contingent of riot police sealed the downtown office of the left-wing Jataiya Samjtantrik Dal (JSD), where supporters of the the Committee Against Butchers and Collaborators (CABC) of the 1971 Bangladesh independence war had assembled.

Police wielding batons injured several people in their efforts to stop the activists leaving the building to march to the nearby venue of their planned rally, witnesses said.

Supporters threw stones at the Police, injuring some 50 people in the road where the JSD office is located, witnesses said.

CABC convenor Jahanara Imam was "jostled" by police, but unhurt, they said, adding that Abdur Razzak, an MP from the main Awami League opposition party, was also harrassed by police.

Imam said government action could not stop their campaign against alleged war criminals, [words indistinct] the group would protest at any public functions attended by Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and lay seige to the government secretariat on April 20.

Meanwhile authorities beefed up security in Dhaka to ensure the safety of guests at an independence reception hosted by President Abdur Rahman Biswas at Bangabhaban Palace, several meters from the JSD office.

Police also stopped a group of CABC supporters on the road leading to the ministerial residency compound and blocked part of the busy Elephant Road.

The CABC, which comprises war veterans and families of war "martyrs", and is backed by most opposition groups, is demanding that Golam Azam, head of the fundamentalist Jamaat-e-Islami group, be tried for crimes allegedly committed during the war which claimed the lives of some three million Bangladeshis.

On independence day last year the group held a mock public trial and sentenced Azam to death. Imam was expected to announce Friday the start of detailed investigations into alleged collaborators.

Azam, who entered Bangladesh in 1978 on a Pakistani passport, was arrested days before independence day 1992 for violating the country's foreigners act.

Twenty-four CACB members, including Imam, are now on bail, following their arrests last year on several charges including treason.

The government has repeatedly said Azam would be tried according to the law and denounced any "peoples court".

Bangladesh, formerly east Pakistan, became independent following a nine-month war of liberation.

Injuries as Police Foil Rally

BK2803154893 Hong Kong AFP in English 1405 GMT 28 Mar 93

[Text] Dhaka, March 28 (AFP)—Police used batons to stop an anti-fundamentalist meeting here Sunday that left 20 protestors injured, five of them seriously, witnesses and organisers said.

Among the injured was Jahanara Imam, chief of the Committee Against Butchers and Collaborators (CABC) of the 1971 Bangladesh independence war, which called the downtown rally to protest Friday's police action at a similar rally, they added.

Imam, 64, was injured in the melee and taken to Dhaka's Post-Graduate Hospital where she was given first aid, witnesses and doctors said.

Hundreds of police backed by paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles troops earlier enforced tight security and blocked all roads leading to a downtown street in a bid not to allow the CABC protest.

There was no official explanation for the police action, but sources claimed permission had not been granted to hold the rally, which was to take place near the opposition Awami League central office.

Witnesses said police used batons after some protestors and leaders sneaked through the security cordon and tried to stage the rally. Activists were also said to have thrown stones at police.

CABC leaders have blamed Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's government for siding with fundamentalist forces against them.

Friday's clashes left 50 people injured and were sparked when police obstructed CABC supporters trying to attend a rally in celebration of Bangladesh's 22nd independence day.

India

All India Congress Committee-I in Session 27-28 Mar

Commentary on Upcoming Meeting

BK2703044493 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 27 Mar 93

[Commentary by K.S. Ramamurthy]

[Text] Much has happened since the AICC [All India Congress Committee-I] session last April to make the Surajkund session unusually important. The demolition of the structure at Ayodhya on 6 December and the communal riots in its wake have caused intense dismay among the people as a whole not only the Congressmen.

At a time when the economy was looking up as a result of various liberalization measures the country was shocked by the Bombay blasts which sent out wrong signals to foreign investors. Resolutions on political, economic, and foreign policy are mandatory at all AICC sessions. This time organizational matters may also come up although they are not on the agenda. The draft resolutions were discussed at the Congress Working Committee meeting yesterday. It speaks of the democratic spirit still animating the organization that some 70 persons individually voiced their views. The political resolution will no doubt reflect the concern over the threat to the secular fabric of the nation. At stake is the great reputation of the Congress in championing intercommunal harmony.

Great leaders from Mahatma Gandhi down have nurtured the tradition of harmony, unity, and fraternity among the people of all communities. The achievements of the last 107 years of Congress history threaten to vanish ignominiously if the country's commitment to secularism is weakened. In recent weeks there is recognition that the question of insulating religion from politics brooks no further delay. Implementing such a resolve on the ground is likely to pose problems not least for the Congress itself. A little contemplation of the past will do Congressmen immense good.

There is broad consensus in the Congress on economic liberalization and international matters. At the (Averdi) Congress session in 1955, the debate on the idea of socialist pattern was often acrimonious. The wheel has turned full circle and there is near unanimity in the country over economic liberalization measures. The ability of the Congress to change direction when necessary has always brought it dividends electorally. This quality has, in fact, distinguished it from other parties most of whom are wedded to one or other dogmas.

If the events of the past few weeks prove anything it is that the country's political stability and commitment to secular values can never be compromised. The world is watching. Surajkund should not fail to give a decisive and unambiguous direction. This is the only way to remove the anguish in the minds of the people as to where the country is heading.

Rao Opens Session

BK2703053293 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0435 GMT 27 Mar 93

[Text] The two-day Surajkund AICC-I [All India Congress Committee-I] session began this morning with a clarion call by the Congress-I president, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao, to fight the forces of communalism

which are raising their head again in the country. Addressing party workers after hoisting the party flag at the venue, Mr. Rao said the party is committed to secularism without which the country cannot survive. He said the nation is passing through a crisis period and if they give up secularism the country will disintegrate. In this session, Mr. Rao said the party workers will have to take a pledge to work for the unity and integrity of the nation and take the country forward.

More on Rao Speech

BK2803044493 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 28 Mar 93

[Commentary by Sushil Chopra]

[Text] The Congress-I president, Mr. Narasimha Rao's, opening speech at Surajkund yesterday morning set the tone of the AICC-I [All India Congress Committee-I] session. Mr. Rao made two things very clear: First his party's determination to fight the communal forces to the end and to put a stop to dissident activities in the party.

His opening speech had immediate impact and in a businesslike pre-lunch session two important official resolutions were adopted unanimously. The first resolution endorsed that one-man, one-post principle shall not apply to the post of the party president and the prime minister. The other resolution authorized Mr. Narasimha Rao to nominate members for the two vacancies in the Congress-I Working Committee [CWC].

The fact that the one-man, one-post resolution was taken up as the first official resolution on the agenda itself shows that Mr. Narasimha Rao believes in the politics of consensus and inner party democracy. The Congress-I Working Committee at its meeting on the ninth of last month had unanimously adopted a resolution saying that one-man, one-post shall not apply to the Congress-I president and the prime minister. The AICC-I, in fact, only endorsed the CWC resolution. This is significant in view of the demand raised in some quarters for the one-man, one-post principle.

In his 40-minute speech, Mr. Narasimha Rao departed from the prepared text and gave a stern warning to party dissidents against going beyond the limit. He appealed to everyone not to cross the Lakshman Rekha [particular limit] and said dissent beyond the limit becomes counterproductive. He made it clear to the dissidents that they should behave [words indistinct] disciplinary action.

Mr. Narasimha Rao also gave the party's plan for fighting the threat of communalism and misuse of religion in politics. He unfolded a two-pronged strategy of educating the people about the designs of such forces and neutralizing them through legal and constitutional measures. Mr. Narasimha Rao openly attacked the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] for using religion to grab political power. He declared this will have to stop at every cost and every Congressmen is prepared for this.

Three resolutions—economic, political, and international—were on the agenda at the Surajkund session to be adopted. The economic and political resolutions were discussed at length and the economic resolution was unanimously approved after several speakers giving their suggestions. The economic resolution calls upon the government to adopt a multi-pronged approach to achieve development with growth and social justice, while the draft political resolution strongly condemned the wanton act of destruction planned and executed by the BJP-RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh] combine on 6 December at Ayodhya.

The AICC-I called upon its workers to intensify the task of amity and harmony and bring back the temper of secularism and social harmony at the earliest.

Session Business Begins

BK2703034493 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 27 Mar 93

[Text] The two-day AICC-I [All India Congress Committee-I] session begins in Surajkund in Haryana this morning. The party president, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao, chairs the deliberations on the political and economic situation in the country, and the international scene.

The Congress-I Working Committee sitting late last evening in New Delhi finalized the draft official resolutions to be taken up at the session. The party spokesman, Mr. Chandulal Chandrakar, told our correspondent that the draft political resolutions, while reposing confidence in the leadership of Mr. Narasimha Rao, outlines the party's stand on Ayodhya and other burning issues. The economic resolution, he said, express satisfaction over the pace of liberalization. It also notes with satisfaction that the reforms are taking proper shape. Mr. Chandrakar said that the non-official resolutions are generally taken up for discussion at the AICC-I session only after official resolutions are sent to vote. He said about 40 non-official motions have been received and priority will be decided through ballot.

Our team of correspondents in Surajkund reports that elaborate arrangements have been made for the AICC-I session and a mini township has come up near the picturesque Peacock Lake. About 5,000 delegates including AICC-I members, special invitees, and party MP's are attending the session.

Resolution Passed on 1 Man-1 Post

BK2703102193 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 27 Mar 93

[Text] The AICC-I [All India Congress Committee-I] session at Surajkund today unanimously endorsed official resolution that the one man-one post principle shall not apply to the Congress president and the prime minister. Moving the resolution, Mr. Balram Jakhar said

the need of the hour is to rally behind one leader to fight the threat of communal and divisive elements. Seconding the motion, Mr. Sharad Pawar criticized the raising of the issue by some even though Mr. Narasimha Rao was elected unanimously both as a party chief and CPP [Congress Parliamentary Party] leader. Others who supported the motion included Mr. Vayalar Ravi, Mr. Dig Vijay Singh, Mr. Ghulam Rasool Khar, Mr. Mahaveer Prasad, and Mr. Veerbhadra Singh.

The AICC-I has taken up for discussion the draft economic resolution, which calls for an action plan to remove unemployment by the turn of the century. Moving the motion, Mr. N.D. Tiwari rejected the criticism of the reform policies and reaffirmed the party's commitment to self-reliance. He said development has to be the main plank to remove unemployment and poverty. Seconding the resolution, Dr. Manmohan Singh said the economic reforms is the prime agenda of the country since India cannot live in isolation in the fast changing world scenario. He said the liberalized policy has smashed the hawala [illegal transaction of money] market, smuggling, and black marketing. He hoped that India will become a major economic power by the end of the century.

The resolution asked the government to evolve a concrete strategy involving industry, trade unions, farmers, youths, and scientists to remove unemployment. It says the liberalization of the economy and structural adjustments are mainly aimed at benefiting the common man and heralding a new phase in the country's transition to a globally competitive economy. The resolution while expressing happiness that the economic reforms are well under way calls upon the people to defeat the nefarious attempts by fissiparous forces out to destabilize the polity and to ensure that socioeconomic reconstruction is pursued vigorously. On the Dunkel draft proposal, the resolution reassures that interests of farmers will be fully protected. On exports, the resolution recommends a national plan of action with close interaction among the farmers, industry, and trade.

Earlier, in his opening speech this morning, the Congress-I president, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao, asserted that definite steps will be taken to deal with the menace of using religion for political ends. He also cautioned against indiscipline in the party and asked the dissidents not to go beyond a point. Mr. Rao said that the communal forces will be tackled by constitutional measures and educating the people about the evil designs of these elements. He said that he had discussions with constitutional experts and political circles and they are of the view that it will be possible to check nonsecular parties from exploiting the electoral process without infringing the fundamental rights of the individuals on freedom of religion. Making a frontal attack on BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] and other such parties, Mr. Narasimha Rao said that the hijacking of religion for political ends should be stopped and we must go beyond mere issuing of appeals to face the chaallenge. He said the ideology of secularism must be translated into the life of the people and (?address) the question of living with secularism and not just articulating it. On the economic scene, the Congress-I president defended the liberaed policy and said despite incidents of violence, considerable progress has been made. Mr. Narasimha Rao said the economic crisis in the country is now over and the reforms will continue.

Turning to party affairs, he said he is prepared to listen to all viewpoints and any opinion can be expressed at the AICC-I forum, which has seen many such storms in the past. Mr. Narasimha Rao said the party has always emerged stronger after every such session. He said the Congress-I is now engaged in a major political and ideological battle and the time has come to put a stop to dissidence.

The All India Congress-I Committee has authorized the party president, Mr. Narasimha Rao, to nominate members for the two vacancies in the Congress Working Committee [CWC]. A motion on the subject was moved by the Kerala PCC-I [Pradesh—State—Congress Committee -I] president, Mr. Vayalar Ravi and was seconded by the Bihar Congress Legislature party leader, Mr. Jagannath Mishra, and the Uttar Pradesh PCC-I president, Mr. Mahaveer Prasad. The motion was adopted by a voice vote amidst opposition by some members. Speaking on the motion, Mr. Arjun Singh said the party president should decide whether the two CWC members will be elected or nominated and his decision will be binding. Mr. Sitaram Kesari said that the party president has the right to nominate members against the CWC vacancies. Mr. Rao finally agreed to abide by the decision of the majority AICC-I members on the issue.

The All India Congress-I Committee expressed deep anguish and grief at the loss of lives in the communal violence after the Ayodhya episode on 6 December last year. In a resolution, the party also mourned the death of innocent people killed in a series of recent bomb blasts in Bombay. It has also mourned the deaths in the bomb blasts in Calcutta. Earlier, the party adopted a resolution to mourn the deaths of those Congressmen who died during the intersession period.

Mr. Sharad Pawar has said that there is no provision in the Congress-I constitution for a secret ballot. He was responding to newsmen's query on the demand for a secret ballot on the one man-one post issue by some dissidents. Mr. Pawar said he will work to keep the Congress together and united under the leadership of Mr. P.V. Narasima Rao.

Meanwhile, 10 dissident Congress-I leaders are sitting on a dharna [staging a sit-in protest] at the venue of the Surajkund AICC-I session to press their demand for a secret ballot to decide the issue of one man-one post. Those staging dharna include Mr. M.L. Fotedar, Mr. K.N. Singh, Mr. Shiv Shankar, Mr. Natwar Singh, and Mrs. Sheila Dixit.

Political-Religious Resolution Adopted

BK2803091093 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 28 Mar 93

[Text] The AICC-I [All India Congress Committee-I] has welcomed the government's move to amend the Constitution to stop the misuse of religion for political purposes. It also resolved to establish an appropriate mechanism to fight communal forces in cooperation with other secular parties. The political resolution adopted unanimously on the second day of the Surajkund session today endorsed the CWC [Congress Working Committee] action plan to meet the post-Ayodhya situation. Condemning the wanton destruction of the disputed structure in Ayodhya, the AICC-I called upon party men to make renewed efforts for creating goodwill among different communities. It said the Ayodhya developments have exposed the real face of communalism of the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party]-RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh] combine. The resolution also asked party men to stand united and disciplined under the leadership of Mr. Narasimha Rao. It said a stable and decisive government is the need of the hour.

Replying to an over seven-hour-long discussion, Mr. Sharad Pawar asserted that the Congress-I workers always faced adverse circumstances with determination and discharged their duties as disciplined soldiers. He said today's challenge can be met only through unity and discipline. He rejected the demand for a ban on the Shiv Sena and the BJP, saying it will not serve any purpose. He said communalism has to be fought politically. Mr. Pawar said the Center is already examining amendments to the People's Representation Act to ban the use of religion in politics.

Several Congress-I leaders have urged the government to take measures to ensure that religion is not mixed with politics to safeguard secularism. Many speakers lashed out at the BJP and like-minded parties for vitiating the atmosphere in the country. Endorsing the CWC action plan against communalism, they said it spells out the most relevant political line. They said that anyone in the government who is not convinced of its determination to fight communal forces should quit office.

The Punjab chief minister, Mr. Beant Singh, said the government should give a strong warning to Pakistan for conspiring to destabilize India. Those who have taken part in the discussions so far include Mr. Buta Singh, Mr. Priyaranjan Das Munshi, Mr. Bhajan Lal, Mr. H.K.L. Bhagat, and Mr. S.S. Ahluwalia, and Mrs. Mohsina Kidwai.

International Relations Resolution Viewed

BK2803092293 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 28 Mar 93

[Text] The AICC-I [All India Congress Committee-I] draft resolution on international affairs today held Pakistan responsible for aggravating bilateral relations by sponsoring terrorism in Punjab, Kashmir, and other areas. It said while New Delhi stands for resolving disputes by dialogue under the Simla Agreement, Pakistan continues to abet terrorism in India. The resolution also asserted that democracy and human rights is very dear to Indian policy, but this cannot become a pretext for resorting to coercive diplomacy.

The resolution suggests that India should take a lead in evolving a nondiscriminatory and universal nuclear nonproliferation proposal to ensure the security interests of all countries.

It welcomed the breakthrough in improvement of relations with China and expressed confidence that the process will pave the way for a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable solution to the long-standing border question.

It also welcomed the close traditional relationship with Russia following the visit of President Yeltsin to India.

Conveying greetings to President Clinton, it hoped that the coming years will witness a quantum jump in economic and other relations with the United States.

The resolution called for taking full advantage of the emergence of Japan as one of the decisive players in the global economy.

It described the major thrust given to step up India's relations with the European Community as of special significance.

It expressed profound distress at the continuing horror in Bosnia and other parts of former Yugoslavia.

The resolution reaffirmed the importance of regional cooperation in South Asia through SAARC [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation] and called for the restoration of peace in Afghanistan.

The draft resolution regretted the rigid attitude of the Israeli Government on the Palestinian question.

It also reiterated India's solidarity with the African National Congress of Dr. Nelson Mandela and called for an end to internal strife in Angola.

Rao Speaks at Closing Session

BK2803130093 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 28 Mar 93

[Text] The two day AICC-I [All India Congress Committee-I] session in Surajkund ended this afternoon with the firm resolve to fight communal forces and to strictly maintain discipline in the party. Winding up the deliberations, the party president, Mr. Narasimha Rao, called upon partymen to sink their differences and work for the nation's stability and unity. He exhorted them to counter the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] propaganda that the Congress-I is opposed to the construction of a Ram temple in Ayodhya. Mr. Narasimha Rao said the Congress-I is committed to the construction of a mosque and a temple in Ayodhya. He said now that the issues of

mandal [job reservation for backward classes] and mandir [temple] are solved, our main agenda should be development. He appealed to the people to have moratorium of at least three years on contentious issues and channelize their energies into development.

In an obvious reference to the indiscipline in the party, Mr. Narasimha Rao said he has taken the message of most of the speakers and he will certainly act on suggestions for maintaining discipline.

Party Said Stronger

BK2903145493 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1430 GMT 29 Mar 93

[Text] The Congress-I spokesman, Mr. V.N. Gadgil, says that the party has emerged stronger from the Surajkund AICC-I [All India Congress Committee-I] session. Talking to newsmen in New Delhi today, he said the message from the session is that the Congress-I alone can face the challenge posed by fundamental forces. He said the mood at the Surajkund session was of unity and discipline. Mr. Gadgil said that the nation has no alternative to the Congress-I and the party has no alternative to Mr. Narasimha Rao's leadership.

The BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] says it will accept the challenge thrown by the Congress-I at its Surajkund session. Talking to newsmen in New Delhi today, the party spokesman, Mr. J.P. Mathur, said the BJP will continue to oppose, what he called, the pseudosecularlist policies of the Congress-I and the government.

Concern Conveyed to Pakistan on Harassment of Diplomats

BK2903144493 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1430 GMT 29 Mar 93

[Text] New Delhi has conveyed to Islamabad its concern over reports of harassment of Indian diplomatic personnel and staff in Pakistan. A spokesman of the External Affairs Ministry said any such harassment is a matter of concern, particularly at a time when Pakistan is expected to exercise restraint and extend cooperation to India. He noted that the Pakistan High Commission has reported as denying the entry of the Memon family members into Pakistan, but, on the same day, the Islamabad Foreign Office stated that all good agencies had been ordered by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to investigate the matter and apprehend the suspects.

Security Along Bangladesh Border Tightened

BK3003014093 Dhaka DAINIK ITTEFAQ in Bengali 23 Mar 93 p 1

[Text] India has tightened security along its border with Bangladesh following the series of explosions which took place in various parts of that country. A directive has been issued to all members of the Border Security Force to ensure that no suspect is able to sneak into Bangladesh. Local inhabitants have disclosed that a strict vigil is being maintained along the Satkhira border. A severe bomb scare is gripping Calcutta following the explosions in Bow Bazar and Shialda Railway Station. Several passengers who returned from Calcutta told this correspondent at Bhomra border that security personnel are keeping a close watch on the people in West Bengal. They frequently visit city hotels and interrogate the guests. Tourists have stopped staying in the hotels due to police harassment. People are also being interrogated along the roads, at bus stops, and at railway stations.

Parliament Approves Bill To Acquire Areas in Ayodhya

BK2903160293 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 29 Mar 93

[Text] Parliament has given approval to the bill to acquire certain areas at Ayodhya. The Rajya Sabha today passed the bill which has already been adopted by the Lok Sabha. Replying to the debate on the bill, the home minister, Mr. S.B. Chavan, strongly denied any collusion between the government and the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party]. He said according to his analysis, the BJP is a fascist and reactionary force and it can never bring any kind of socioeconomic transformation in this country. Mr. Chavan said two trusts have been created for the construction of a temple and a mosque. Only those persons who enjoy the confidence of the people will be appointed as trustees. Mr. Chavan said that although the reference to the Supreme Court has been made under Article-143, the government would abide by the opinion of the highest court.

Earlier, the house rejected the statutory resolution moved by Mr. K.L. Sharma, BJP, disapproving the ordinance. The house also rejected some opposition amendments before adopting the bill by a voice vote. The members belonging to the BJP, left parties, and JD-S [Janata Dal-S] walked out of the house protesting against the rejection of their demands.

Rehearsal Reportedly Held in Agra for Bombay Blasts

BK2903100793 Madras DINAMALAR in Tamil 16 Mar 93 p 3

[Text] Kanpur, 16 March—The latest report makes a shocking revelation that a rehearsal for the bomb blasts in Bombay was held in Agra last month. There were a series of bomb blasts in Bombay last Friday in which more than 300 people were killed and more than 1000 injured. The central government has accused foreign forces of involvement in these blasts. Now a report indicates that certain evil forces conducted a rehearsal in the Uttar Pradesh city of Agra last month before staging their ghastly act in Bombay. Through a wireless message, the Uttar Pradesh police has informed Bombay police Commissioner A.S. Samra about this. Dharamvir, the inspector general of police in Kanpur, says:

Last month in Agra bombs exploded in two luxury hotels meant for foreign tourists, in a passenger bus, and on the Satpati Express train originating from Bhopal. Only two persons were killed in these powerful bomb blasts. Therefore, the matter did not assume significance. The series of bomb blasts in Agra cannot be taken lightly, as they have several things in common with the blasts in Bombay. Both events took place on Friday, the bombs exploded after 1330 in the afternoon, and in both cases foreign tourists and foreign investors were targeted. On the basis of these similarities, it looks certain that the Agra events were only a rehearsal. In addition, letters written in Pushtu, Urdu, and broken English were recovered during investigations carried out in the hotels where the blasts took place. These letters purportedly contain notes to Tehrik al-Mojahedin terrorists of Kashmir. Bombs exploded in six places in Agra. A leaflet with the inscription "there will be bomb blasts if the killing of the general public in Kashmir does not stop" was recovered from one area. No one was arrested in connection with the Agra blasts. An investigation of the hotel register and the seized letters will help detect the brain behind the Bombay blasts. Dharampal also said the Bombay police commissioner was informed that the Agra events might be a rehearsal. Intelligence Bureau officials have rushed to Kanpur to investigate the facts about the rehearsal and to recover further evidence.

Police See Link Between Bombay Riots, Blasts

BK2703032193 Hong Kong AFP in English 0117 GMT 27 Mar 93

[By M.N. Sunil]

[Text] Bombay, March 27 (AFP)—Bombay police suspect a conspiracy links the deadly March 12 bomb blasts with bloody Hindu-Muslim riots that rocked the western Indian metropolis in December and January.

"In hindsight, we do suspect a larger conspiracy," police commissioner Amarjeet Singh Samra said on Friday.

It was the first time police had spoken of a connection between the riots and the bombings.

Samra said criminals had been let loose to strike terror among the 12 million residents of the city, India's commercial capital, in both the riots which left some 1,000 people dead and the blasts which killed nearly 300.

"Arson, stabbing and shooting as well as explosions are standard methods used by terrorists to create panic in the population," the police chief said.

"Criminals and smugglers were used to create fights between different communities," he said.

"Such elements have no religion, caste or community. Their only consideration is money."

The riots in December and January were described as a fallout of the Babri mosque's destruction by Hindu zealots in the northern town of Ayodhya.

In January, the violence degenerated into a free-for-all with politicians, gangsters, slumlords and tenants using the cover of communal violence to settle old scores. Muslims bore the brunt of the rioting.

The March 12 blasts, which ripped through the Bombay Stock Exchange, Air India headquarters, luxury hotels and shopping centres, were blamed on Muslim members of the underworld.

But Samra, who became police chief on February 1, appeared to discount religion as a factor in the riots and the explosions.

"If you see most gangs in Bombay today or if you see the names of most criminals we have shot or apprehended, you will see that they come from almost all parts of the country and belong to all religions.

"In a sense, these criminals are very secular," Samra said.

He did not say who police suspected as conspirators.

Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao's government has said investigations into the bomb blasts would probably reveal a foreign conspiracy aimed at destabilising India's economic reforms programme.

The main opposition Bharatiya Janata Party has accused Pakistan's military intelligence of engineering the bombings, a charge angrily denied by Islamabad.

India has said that six alleged Muslim smugglers named as prime suspects in the blasts escaped first to Dubayy and then travelled to the Pakistan city of Karachi. It has demanded that Islamabad catch and deport them.

Samra said that most of the 18 people caught in connection with the blasts and subsequent seizures of explosives had initially believed themselves to be part of typical silver or gold smuggling rackets.

"It was a little later that big money came into the picture, luring them deeper into the game," he said.

India has requested Interpol as well as U.S. experts to help with investigations into the blasts, the worst terrorist attack ever staged on its soil.

But senior police officials here expressed doubts over the sincerity and commitment of Interpol and the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation—whose detectives visited Bombay—in extending help.

Interpol should have by now informed Bombay police about the origin of the plastic explosives used in the bombings but had not, they said.

"RDX and similar plastic explosives are manufactured even in India by ordnance factories," a senior officer said.

"But every factory or every country leaves certain impurities or trace elements which later help in determining the country of origin.

"With the kind of sophisticated systems and data at their disposal, Interpol and similar agencies who volunteered to help or were called to help should have by now given us this information.

"But they just seem to be interested in a lot of dramatics, that is all," the officer added.

New Chief of Militant Group Among 5 Killed in Punjab

BK3003092593 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 30 Mar 93

[Text] In Punjab, five militants, including the newly appointed chief of a militant organization, Balwinder Singh, were killed in encounters last night. According to an official spokesman in Chandigarh, Balwinder Singh and one of his accomplices were killed in an encounter with the security forces in village Korevidhan in Amritsar District this morning. Balwinder Singh, involved in 100 killings, was responsible for the attack on the then-director general of Punjab police [DGP], Mr. J.F. Ribeiro, at Jullundur in 1986. The DGP escaped unhurt while his wife was injured. Security forces gunned down hard-core militant Tarsem Singh Konke and his accomplice in an encounter near village Rakhba in Ludhiana District. Another militant was killed by a rival gang near village Cheema in Sangrur District.

Calcutta Blast Explosives Contained Nitroglycerine

BK3003041093 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 30 Mar 93

[Text] According to a preliminary report, the explosives used in the recent bomb blasts in Calcutta contained nitroglycerine. The deputy controller of explosives submitted the report to the Calcutta police.

Meanwhile, three bombs were recovered yesterday from a house in Jorashakor area of the city.

Two Militants Killed, 6 Apprehended in Kashmir

BK2903150093 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1430 GMT 29 Mar 93

[Text] Two militants were among four killed, while the security forces apprehended six militants in the Kashmir Valley during the last 24 hours. In another incident, two persons, including one security personnel, were injured when militants hurled a grenade at Jahangir Chowk in Srinagar. Out of six militants apprehended, three were from Srinagar, two from Baramula, and one from Kupwara District. During different search operations, the security forces recovered four Ak type rifles and six magazines.

Police Inspector, 13 Militants Killed in Punjab

BK2903032793 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 29 Mar 93

[Text] In Punjab, 13 militants and a police inspector have been killed in separate encounters since last night. According to an official spokesman, the police inspector was killed in an exchange of fire when a police party raided a hideout in Begowal village in Kapurthala District. One hard-core militant, Joga Singh, and his wife along with their accomplices were killed at Kanpur village in Amritsar District last night. Four other militants were killed in another encounter in the same area. Elsewhere in the state, two militants each were killed in Kapurthala, Jullundur, and Ludhiana Districts.

Nine Punjab Militants Killed by Security Forces

BK2603161693 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 26 Mar 93

[Text] In Punjab, nine militants, including two hard-core, were killed and nine others were held in various encounters with the security forces last night. According to an official spokesman, two hard-core militants, Harbansh Singh, alias Fauji, and Lakhwinder Singh, alias Lakha, were killed in the encounter at village Sukhajira in Gurdaspur District.

Madhya Pradesh Police Seize 'Large Cache' of Arms

BK2803034293 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 28 Mar 93

[Text] The Madhya Pradesh police have seized a large cache of arms and ammunition from Chanderi and (Chanchura) areas in Guna District. According to police sources the seizure included countrymade bombs, dynamite (sticks), a revolver, and live cartridges. Twelve persons have been arrested in this connection.

Court Gives Life Imprisonment to Akali Head Priest

BK2703145893 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1430 GMT 27 Mar 93

[Text] A Delhi sessions court today sentenced the Akal Takht [the highest seat of Sikh religion] head priest Bhai Ranjeet Singh to life imprisonment in the Nirankari [a Sikh sect] chief Baba Gurbachan Singh murder case. Delivering the order on the sentence in the high security Tihar jail, Additional Sessions Judge Mr. R.P. Gupta also awarded him the term sentences of seven years each to run concurrently in three other offenses relating to the same case.

DPRK Vice President Meets Sharma, Discusses NPT

BK2603161293 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 26 Mar 93

[Text] The vice president of DPRK, Mr. Yi Chong-ok, today called on the president, Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, at Rashtrapati Bhavan [President's House] in New Delhi. During his half an hour meeting with Dr. Sharma, the visiting envoy apprised the president of the developments in DPRK and Pyongyang's view on the question of Korean reunification and its withdrawal from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. Mr. Ok also handed over a message from President Kim Il-song to Dr. Sharma. Mr. Ok also called on the vice president, Mr. K.R. Narayanan.

Iran

Violation of UN Sanctions Against Iraq Denied

LD3003063793 Tehran IRNA in English 0551 GMT 30 Mar 93

[Text] United Nations, New York, March 30, IRNA—Iran has categorically denied reports on the alleged shipment of Iraqi oil to Iran. Iran's permanent mission to the United Nations in a statement issued here Monday [29 March] reaffirmed Iran's commitments in fully respecting the sanctions imposed by the United Nations Security Council resolutions against Iraq including Resolution 661 (1990).

It rejected allegations made by the press and U.S. State Department (in its March 29 briefing) implying that Iran may be in violation of those sanctions.

"The government of the Islamic Republic of Iran continues to comply with United Nations Security Council resolutions imposing sanctions against Iraq and in this connection it has been diligent in preventing smuggling, i.e., barter and other types of trades by local people in Iran-Iraq border areas," the statement concluded.

UK Trade Visit Cancelled; 'Hostile' Attitude Cited

NC3003092593 Paris AFP in English 0816 GMT 30 Mar 93

[Text] Tehran, March 30 (AFP) - Iran has cancelled a visit by a British trade delegation because of London's "hostile" attitude, the TEHRAN TIMES reported Tuesday.

The delegation from some 20 companies was due to have talks with the Iranian private and public sectors on exploring "fresh avenues for improvement in reciprocal ties," the paper said.

However, Iran scrapped the trip scheduled for the last two weeks in April because of "the hostile attitude of Britain against Iran in recent months," the newspaper said.

No British officials were available at the embassy here to confirm the report.

Iran was angered by London's renewed public support last month for Salman Rushdie, condemned to death in 1989 by the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeyni for his novel "The Satanic Verses."

Britain has also tightened controls on technology sales to Iran.

Deputy Foreign Minister Mahmud Va'ezi warned two weeks ago that Iran would make an "appropriate response." And influential conservative cleric Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati recently called for a "review" of economic ties between London and Tehran.

Despite the poor state of their relations, Britain is Iran's fourth trade partner, with exports worth a billion dollars (568 million dollars) in 1992.

In a move seen as aimed at businessmen, Iran increased the price of visas for Britons 30-fold this month to 504 pounds (725 dollars).

Egypt Should Resolve 'Unrest' Among Muslims

LD2603202693 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1930 GMT 26 Mar 93

[Unattributed commentary]

[Excerpts] [passage omitted] While the Cairo regime, practising violence, beatings, torture and wide-scale detentions, endeavors to silence the Islamist outcries of Muslims there, it seems that these efforts are creating negative impacts inside and outside the country.

The Egyptian Muslim people, who have been living under the domination of Islam for centuries—presenting numerous Islamic thinkers and strugglers in the current century in a country which is the birthplace of fresh thoughts on Islamic issues—have now found themselves ruled by a regime which not only refrains from practising (?the respected) Islamic principles, but also tries to lead the community toward the wicked Western values rapidly. In addition, the compromise of the Egyptian Government with the Zionist regime and, even, its playing a mediatory role for the creation of compromise between the al-Qods [Jerusalem] occupying regime and other Arab countries, have hurt the national Islamic emotions of the people.

This is at a time when, despite extensive financial aid from Western states, especially the United States, the economy in that country still faces numerous difficulties, and the poor class of people are receiving considerable pressure. To all these, if one adds the prevalence of financial-administrative corruption, one can realize the major cause of dissatisfaction of the Egyptian people and Islamic fighters of the regime.

The Cairo propaganda, based on referring the cause of incidents to external factors and foreign countries, seems

to be unrealistic and contrary to the current realities in the Egyptian society. Therefore, the Egyptian regime, instead of physical and (?eliminative) attitudes, had better find out the cause of the dissatisfaction and unrest and try to find a solution in paying attention to the internal problems and the demands of Muslims.

Embassy in Prague Protests Remarks of UK's Hogg

LD2703211593 Tehran IRNA in English 1742 GMT 27 Mar 93

[Text] Tehran, March 27, IRNA—The Iranian Embassy in Prague Saturday [27 March] protested the statement by the Deputy Foreign Minister of Britain Douglas Hogg in a Czech paper at which he had called for rising international pressure against Iran to resolve the case of the sentenced apostate Salman Rushdie.

In his recent interview with the daily LADO VOUNOVINI the British ambassador in the Czech capital said that the British government would use every means for beating back the Islamic Republic.

He said that since the turn of the year Britons had concluded that the British Government should offer more support for Rushdie, and that John Major's meeting with the author of 'The Satanic Verses' was already in the British prime minister's programmes for the current year.

The protest by the Iranian Embassy emphasized the need for discontinuing Western support for the Indian born British apostate who has deeply injured the feelings of the world of Islam in his blasphemous book.

It stressed that the death decree on Rushdie had been issued by the highest ranking religious authority in Iran, and upheld by the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) [ICO] in its 18th assembly in Riyadh.

The father of the Islamic revolution, Imam Khomeyni, gave his historical verdict against Rushdie on 14th February 1989 following the spilling of Muslim blood by the Satanic novel in India and Pakistan.

Habibi Holds Talks With French Ambassador

LD2903175393 Tehran IRNA in English 1640 GMT 29 Mar 93

[Text] Tehran, March 29, IRNA—France considers the Islamic Republic to be the main parameter for peace in the Persian Gulf and Central Asia, the French ambassador here, Hubert Colin de Verdiere, told First Vice President Hasan Habibi today.

He said with respect to the opportunities available the French Government wishes to broaden relations with Iran in the economic, cultural and political areas.

He said regular contacts between officials of the two countries and their exchange of opinion on regional issues would be highly beneficial to both Tehran and Paris.

Habibi in response expressed hope that relations between the two countries would steadily broaden.

He said Iran is against the disintegration of Iraq and also upholds the territorial integrity of Afghanistan. Habibi added that interests of all Mojahedin groups in Afghanistan should be safeguarded and that no foreign country should interfere in Afghan affairs.

French Envoy Meets With Velayati

LD3003121993 Tehran IRNA in English 1159 GMT 30 Mar 93

[Text] Tehran, March 30, IRNA—Outgoing French Ambassador to Iran Hubert Colin de Verdiere said here today that the future government in France will continue to attach particular attention to Paris-Tehran ties.

De Verdiere who met Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati at the end of his tenure in Iran, expressed full assurance that grounds were prepared for further expansion of mutual ties.

Referring to the French status in Iran's foreign policy, Velayati in reply hoped that bilateral relations in political, economic, industrial and cultural areas would further broaden.

Reaction to Introduction of Single Exchange Rate

Central Bank Governor Comments

LD2703172393 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1100 GMT 27 Mar 93

[Interview with Dr. Mohammad Hoseyn 'Adeli, governor of the Central Bank, by unidentified correspondent, in the "Economic Magazine" program—recorded]

[Excerpt] [Correspondent] [passage omitted] There is a lot of talk about currency, Dr. Adeli. What is the reason for introducing the single exchange rate?

[Adeli] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. Let me begin with saying hello to the dear listeners and esteemed compatriots. I hope you too are well and I hope your good economic programs can shed light on some of the government's economic policies for our dear people. Regarding your question, which was what is the reason for introducing the single exchange rate, I need to give some explanations. In fact, the rate of exchange depends on the value of our rial; this is the other side of the coin in the rate of exchange. The rate of exchange is the value of rial against other currencies. In fact, we want to talk about the value of our own national currency. Why should the value of our national currency have a single value or rate of exchange? If we put the

question in this way, the answer is automatically in the question. And the answer is this: Can the national currency of a country—which is the criteria of values, the measure of values, everything in the country can be measured against this—how many rates should this have? How many values should this have? Look dear ones, when we say what is the value of the rial, it means that for example we want to measure the value of various goods, like tables, chairs, cars or labor. We must have a single criterion, we cannot have two criteria. For example, can we say the distance between Tehran and Qom is 170 km; but the meters are half a meter? However, when we want to measure the distance between Tehran and Esfahan, we use the meters which are twice that meter.

[Correspondent] I think so far the situation was like this: There were a number of rates of exchange, or the value of our currency was calculated through a number of values. This is why we ask: What is the reason for the single exchange rate?

[Adeli] Well done. That means since we did not have a single criterion to evaluate our economy, our labor or the price of our goods, and because we needed a unified criterion for this evaluation, we made it unified so that we could accurately estimate the value of our economic sectors and our goods. When the industrial rial, the agricultural rial, the rial of government employees' salary and the housing rial have different values, we can never compare them accurately and say which is right or which is wrong.

[Correspondent] A question arises at this point: Does foreign currency have such an effect on our rial that we evaluate on this basis? Is that the deciding factor or basically is it our own rial that decides?

[Adeli] Our own rial decides, definitely. When we say the rate of exchange, we mean the value of our own rial against other national currencies. We are not discussing how foreign currency affects [values]. The point is this: We decide the exchange rate for our currency against alien currencies. We cannot say the value of our national currency against alien currencies is this amount when we have our industrial boots on and then go to the agricultural sector and say: No sir! Our national currency has a different value now. In fact, evaluating the value of our national currency must be a single evaluation. The situation of our own currency and the value of our currency has a greater effect on our economy. Therefore, the decision has to be taken at the national level. The foreigners, well whatever value their currency has, it has. It has nothing to do with this. The important point is what we decide.

Commerce Minister Comments

LD2903190493 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 29 Mar 93

[Excerpt] Some $1.25 billion worth of foreign currency has been allocated in the current year [beginning 21 March] for the payment of subsidies for six essential goods, namely cooking oil, rice, wheat, meat, and sugar [as heard].

Commerce Minister Mr. Vahhaji announced this at a briefing for journalists in Mashhad today, and added: Apart from essential goods and medicine, in the current year, other goods will be secured with the floating rate of exchange. He explained that the introduction of a single rate of exchange in the current year, far from causing price increases, will instead provide the opportunity for the supervision, control, and stabilization of prices.

Mr. Vahhaji pointed out that special punishments have been envisaged for overpricing practices regarding flour and bread. He said: The rise in the price of bread on the part of some of Tehran's production units was unauthorized; since the matter has been pursued, the price of bread has returned to its previous level. [passage omitted]

Currency System Welcomed

LD2903083393 Tehran IRNA in English 0737 GMT 29 Mar 93

[Text] Tehran, March 29, IRNA—An Iranian daily Monday [29 March] welcomed the announcement of the single-parity rate system as a long-expected currency reform believing it would boost country's economy.

The editorial in the 'KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL' daily said that the existence of three exchange rate systems had halted the economic liberalization programmes of President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani.

The Central Bank of Iran on Saturday announced the new single parity system scrapping the multiple exchange rates system, three of the most important of which were the official (at rls. [rials] 70), competitive at (rls. 600) and the floating (at about rls. 1,600) against a U.S. dollar.

Referring to some aspects of the liberalization programme including an increase in the role of the private sector, privatization of the formerly nationalized companies and attracting foreign investments, the daily said that the multiple exchange rates system made the investors confused on what rates they should enter into investments.

The daily termed the idea underlying the multiple exchange system as a mistake which "damaged and drained the Iranian economy and governments' treasury enormously."

"The idea has not only been a mistake and a failure in Iran but also in almost all developing countries whose governments have found that parallel foreign exchange market-...cannot help them to either defend their international reserves or maintain overvalued exchange rates."

It said that the multiple system and difference in subsidized exchange rates and the floating ones had led to

emergence of corruption in the government saying that ending this was the least the currency reform could do.

Turning to the fear shown by the vulnerable classes of another round of inflation in the country as a result of the single partiy rates, the daily said their fear is ill-founded.

It considered the reform as the "best long-run interest of the country and its people even though it might have some short-run drawbacks."

The daily ensured that the real losers would not be the deprived masses who purchased everything at floating rate, but those with privileged access to government-subsidized foreign exchange.

New System Analyzed

NC3003112293 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0340 GMT 30 Mar 93

[Central News Unit Research Group commentary]

[Text] In the name of God.

The Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran began its first day of work in the new [Iranian] year by abolishing the official foreign exchange rate of 700 rials and the competitive rate of 600 rials and announcing a single floating rate.

Economic experts believe this measure can be considered an announcement of a single parity rate for foreign exchange. In the list of the valid foreign exchange rates that has been implemented this week in our banking system, the dollar is equivalent to 1542 rials; the Deutsche mark is equivalent to 945 rials. Of course, it can be said that another rate prevails on the free market, where the dollar is being exchanged at 100 rials higher.

In the first Five-Year Plan for the country's social, economic development, the formulators of economic policy eliminated multiple foreign exchange rates and moved toward a balanced single foreign exchange unit. In the first few years of the plan, foreign exchange dealings were carried out according to rates more numerous than the fingers on our hands!

Initially, the government narrowed down this multiplicity of rates to three: the government, competitive, and floating rates. The government foreign exchange was applied to dealings in essential and agricultural goods; the competitive rate was used for transactions in the production sector; and the floating rate was applicable to imports and services.

It could be said that from the second half of the last [Iranian] year, the competitive rate for foreign exchange had rarely been allocated to production units, which preferred to use the floating rates. As President Hashemi-Rafsanjani announced in his Nowruz message, although some temporary problems had resulted from the transition from the competitive to the floating rate, the nation's economic structure had adapted itself to current circumstances—which have come into force officially with the advent of the new year—by preparing for this situation earlier.

From the beginning of 1372 [year beginning 21 March 1993], there will be no government or competitive rate. The government will place its foreign exchange earnings in the banking system. Those who require foreign exchange will be able to obtain their requirements from banks, except for essential commodities, pharmaceuticals, and ordnance, for which dealings will continue to be based on last year's government rates. Experts say one-third of the country's foreign exchange earnings will amount to approximately $5.2 billion when calculated at last year's government rates.

Meanwhile, some economic experts believe the floating foreign exchange rate, which is a continuation of the trend of the past year as announced by the Central Bank, is the same parity rate that has been specified on the basis of the market mechanism. [preceding word in English] This rate will constitute the basis of all dealings. In the future—with the centralization of the country's foreign exchange rates in the banking system and the adapting of government and private institutions and moving them to rectify import goods in accordance with the current circumstances—this rate might be adjusted.

In any case, the people and the economic sector expect that with the implementation of a single parity rate for foreign exchange, the Central Bank will provide more details so that the people will have complete information on the issue.

Trade Balance With 6 Industrial Countries Worsens

LD3003102193 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0630 GMT 30 Mar 93

[Text] The level of Iran's exports to six industrial countries of the world has decreased by half, while imports have increased by one-third, reducing Iran's trade balance with these countries 20-fold. According to IRNA, imports from Iran by Germany, Japan, Italy, Britain, France, and the United States fell by 40 percent in the last Christian year, reaching $6.186 billion, the largest part of which consisted of oil. In return, exports from these countries to Iran showed a significant increase, from $9 billion to $12 billion. The reduction of Japan's imports from Iran has been stated as the most important factor contributing to Iran's increased trade deficit.

* Attack on Montazeri's Residence Detailed

93LA0010B London KEYHAN in Persian 25 Mar 93 p 2

[Text] On 21 Bahman 1371 [10 Feb 1993], while announcing his belief in the Islamic revolution and stating that he "has given everything for the revolution,"

he reveals that many clerics besides him opposed the continuation of the war but did not dare tell Khomeyni: "Some would not mention it, were negligent. I remember I wrote a five-page letter about the war to the late Imam, which has probably been seen by the gentlemen (in this letter, Montazeri emphasized the necessity of ending the war). One day Ayatollah Meshkini came to our house and began to complain, saying: Sir, they are striking Tehran with missiles; you are sitting here and do not go to help the people. The people are in despair, they curse in the line.... I said: Go and mention it. He said: Why do you not say something? I read the letter that I had written about the war. As God is my witness, he said several times, Thank God; you have said what I wanted to say. I said: No, your duty has not ended. I am only one person and you must write to him, too."

Montazeri continues: "Ahmad Aqa came here one day. I said: You see the situation now, but I want them not to have an excuse, even a hundred years from now, about the revolution. In my last meeting with the late Imam, Ahmad Aqa was also sitting there.... I said: The violations that are being committed in the prisons, courts, and organizations, I wish they were not blamed on you.... But, unfortunately, the situation is such that in some organizations, such as our prisons, there is violence and things happen that are attributed to the opinion of the Imam.... They blame these things on you and stain your reputation...."

Montazeri then describes his visit with a "cleric from Tehran" as follows: "One of the prominent people that I will not mention by name and who is a cleric in Tehran had said four or five months ago that he wanted to see me. Then he had said: Several high-ranking people in the intelligence service had told me that they made us bear witness that his home was at the disposal of the hypocrites and that they decided what line he must follow. Unfortunately, we had to testify. Will God forgive us our sin?"

The dismissed successor of Khomeyni adds: Once I told the Imam that when the KGB infiltrates the CIA and the CIA the KGB, you can surmise that they have agents in our organization...and agents who determine the line. I mean that the conspiracy makers did their job and engaged in conspiracies, and I thank God that I never either wanted a position nor was or am interested in a position. Everyone should know that I never did anything just to get a position. And I am not afraid of anything, thank God. At the time that they regularly arrested us and took us to prison, we said to ourselves, now suppose they execute us. As God is my witness, I was not afraid of execution, not one iota. And I remain silent to preserve my dignity. Not that I have anything to say. I see that there is injustice and falsehood. At that time, they would say, Do not start saying Khomeyni, Khomeyni. Here we want to carry on our business. They would not even allow the Imam's decree to be repeated. Many of these people have now become supporters of the revolution and, as it is said today, opportunists. They are now deciding the line and are the protectors of the revolution, and the young people, many of whom are faithful to the revolution, must be in the prisons. They make cases against them. Many of them are in prisons. And then, the gentleman says, Yes, we do not have one political prisoner in Iran. Well, revered sir, people know that all this which is said is for foreign consumption. They want to tell the foreigners that we do not have political prisoners. Otherwise, they know it themselves and the people also knew that the young people who are sincere to the revolution are being pursued...then a group of opportunists who were not at all for the revolution, and you could not mention the name of the Imam and the revolution before them because they ridiculed us, have now become supporters of the revolution...and make cases against the children of the revolution."

Montazeri concluded: "I am forgiving toward the youth who are uninformed and are provoked by many to put pressure on us, to put pressure on our friends, because they are uninformed. But in regards to those who know what the story is and know what the conspiracy makers did and keep quiet, I leave their fate to God on Judgment Day."

Attack and Destruction of the Office and the Hoseyniyyeh

On the other hand, the office of Ayatollah Montazeri described in a separate announcement how after a Friday prayer session in Qom under the leadership of Ali Meshkini, the participants were provoked in protest demonstrations against Ayatollah Montazeri. This communique states: "Some did not agree, but some agreed, and finally after the Friday prayers, along with a group of people who were uninformed gathered about 500 people in front of his house, and among them about 60 people were shouting insulting slogans. Then distorted copies of the text of the statements of Grand Ayatollah Montazeri were run off and published along with slanders and lies. A group of people tore down the sign for the office and then the loudspeaker of the Guard Corps car announced the conclusion of the events and ordered the people to disperse.

"...then on Monday, 24 Bahman [13 Feb], the seminary students in His Honor's religious jurisprudence lesson-...came to the Martyrs Hoseyniyyeh, but saw that new people, about 100 other people, had come. The feeling was that they intended to disrupt the lesson and cause chaos. Hence, his honor found it expedient to terminate the lesson. After it was announced, the same group started shouting slogans, and then one of them spoke against the statements of Grand Ayatollah Montazeri, the contents of which were the same repetitive issues that appear in newspapers and pamphlets that once in a while have been published under forged titles by some organizations in recent years and is nothing more than insults, slander, and distortion of His Honor's statements .... They arrested about six seminary students who were present in the Hoseyniyyeh and also Mr. Ruhollah, His Honor's grandson.... " ...Then about 2200, the main attack started."

1. More than 1,000 guards and security and information agents were involved in this attack.

2. The main street on the shores from Hajiyeh Bridge to the New Power Plant Bridge absolutely closed down and was under the control of the forces.

3. All sorts of destructive and precautionary equipment, such as cranes, fire trucks, and instruments for metal soldering and cutting, were brought to the scene.

4. The attack started with the pulling down of the roof over the pavement and the Hoseyniyyeh. And then the large gates, which were in the beginning, middle, and end of the alley were pulled up. Then, by pulling up the doors and breaking the locks, the attack on the office of His Honor and the Martyr's Hoseyniyyeh...began and much damage was inflicted. The cash inventory, about 1.3 million tomans for paying the tuition of the seminary students, was taken as well as most of the personal and nonpersonal equipment, such as machines, books, radios, tape recorders, vacuum cleaners, cameras, tape duplication equipment, and photo albums. All of this was done in the absence of His Honor and his relatives, and no minutes were taken. They sealed the doors of the Hoseyniyyeh and the office.... Before the start of the attack, the telephone lines in the area were cut, and the members of his household and neighbors were all surrounded and prohibited from going into the alley or going to each other's homes. It ended at about 0300.

After the publication of the report of the attack and plunder of the office and the Hoseyniyyeh and the anxiety and strong public disgust, many of the scholars of the seminary called by telephone and sent messages to ask about the situation and express sympathy. Apparently, Ayatollah Mo'men, Ayatollah Mohaqqeq-Damad, and Ayatollah Sane'i, in their lessons, condemned this type of action and expressed disappointment.

Following the publication of this report, the money and some of the equipment were returned, but most of them are still confiscated.

* Guards Killed, Hostages Taken in Confrontation

93LA0009A London KEYHAN in Persian 28 Jan 93 p 1

[Text] In bloody clashes last Thursday night between revolutionary guards and a group that the regime has called smugglers, 20 guardsmen were killed and 80 were taken hostage. No information has yet been obtained concerning the site where the revolutionary guards are being held. The incident took place at Jali Rabat along the border between Pakistan, Iran, and Afghanistan. Government forces of the Islamic Republic attacked the invaders with cannon-equipped helicopters, and they in turn fired on the revolutionary guards with rockets and heavy machine guns. In this merciless war, which lasted until dawn Friday, an unspecified number of people on both sides were also wounded.

REUTER, reporting on this long and bloody battle from Quetta, the capital of Pakistan's Baluchistan, writes: According to Pakistani border guards who saw this incident, Iranian Government forces had precise information on the presence of the insurgents and the hours of their operation, and went against them with elaborate equipment. In the first hours of the clash, the insurgents fired tens of rockets and set fire to eight revolutionary guard vehicles such as personnel carriers, trucks and jeeps, and a number of mortar rounds landed on Pakistani territory and in the vicinity of that nation's border installations, but did not cause any loss of life.

A Pakistani officer said: This clash was the continuation of clashes two weeks earlier in which a number of other revolutionary guards lost their lives. In reality this war was considered a kind of settling of accounts. Last Tuesday after the insurgents killed two revolutionary guardsmen, police went to the Jali Rabat area with more people and succeeded in arresting 20 people. In a bloody clash Thursday night, the insurgents killed 20 revolutionary guards and took 80 of them as hostages to an unknown location in retaliation for the killing of 20 of their comrades.

In the Islamic Republic's first reaction, Musavi Tabrizi, the national public prosecutor, said: In this clash 25 of the "insurgents" were arrested and five of them were killed. He also said that the number of government personnel killed was five. According to the public prosecutor, the insurgents, led by Hamid Takhtani, attacked two buses "carrying soldiers on the way to the border" and took all but 25 of them prisoner.

Recently an agreement was made between officials of the ministries of the interior of Pakistan and Iran so that they can coordinate their fight against border smugglers, but the REUTER report tells of a kind of indifference on the part of the Pakistanis concerning the issue. This is undoubtedly one of the bloodiest and heaviest battles in the history of the Iranian-Pakistani border between the Islamic Republic's police forces and people the regime has called smugglers.

'Murder' of Baluchi Activists Condemned

NC2903101893 (Clandestine) Voice of Iranian Kordestan in Persian 1730 GMT 28 Mar 93

[Station commentary]

[Text] Dear listeners: The clerical mullahs regime continues to extract sacrifices from us. According to news agencies and statements disseminated by Baluchi sources in Europe and Pakistan, two Baluchi combatants were shot in Karachi, Pakistan, by the terrorists of the Islamic republic's regime.

These two Baluchi combatants, both of whom had records of antiregime activities and were considered political opponents of the regime in Baluchestan, are: Delaviz Khan and Heybatollah Naru'i. Khan was a leader of the Naru'i tribe and had taken an antiregime

stance from when the clerical regime took over. He had been arrested and imprisoned. After his release from the regime's dungeons, he did not abandon his struggle, continuing his opposition of the policies of the Islamic republic until his death.

Naru'i was one of the regime's vehement opponents in Baluchestan. He had close friendly links with the humanitarian circles of Europe and had collected documents and evidence on the clerical regime's atrocities in Baluchestan, which he had submitted to Amnesty International and other international organizations.

A while back, another combatant Baluchi leader named Mohammad Amin Mir-Lashari was attacked and wounded by the regime's terrorists. Earlier, other Baluchi leaders and combatants in Pakistan were attacked and assassinated by terrorists affiliated to the clerical regime. A few years ago, a Baluchi leader named Sardar Mowladad was killed in Pakistan.

During the course of the clerical regime's rule in Iran, the Baluchi people have been struggling to attain their national and patriotic rights in Baluchestan. A number of Baluchis have lost their lives on this road. The repressive forces of the regime have currently mustered all their efforts to crush the rightful movement of the Baluchi people and do not hesitate to commit the worst crimes to achieve this end.

The regime's propaganda apparatus is seeking to conceal the facts about the situation in Baluchestan and to mask the operations by the corps and the Armed Forces to suppress the Baluchis as a campaign against drug smugglers. However, the situation is such that the national democratic movement of the Baluchi people has proliferated and their heightening abhorrence of the clerical regime and its policies continues.

All Baluchis demand the autonomy of Baluchestan and have risen up to attain it by various tactics. It is an immutable reality that has plunged the regime into fear and apprehension. The murders of Khan and Naru'i are, in an of themselves, an indication of the dread in the ranks of the regime. The recent terrorist acts reaffirm the irrefutable fact that the regime's terrorist activities against the combatants on the path of freedom and various political opponents of the regime continue to increase.

In its utter pessimism, the clerical regime intends to physically eliminate opposition leaders and political figures. Therefore, in continuation of this policy, it has organized hundreds of terrorist groups and has dispatched them throughout the world. This is because the clerical regime is anti-human and is prepared to use all the means at its disposal to perpetrate all kinds of atrocities.

The Democratic Party of Kordestan [DPK] in Iran, condemns the murders of the Baluchi leaders and reiterates its support of the rightful struggle of the Baluchi people to attain their national and patriotic rights. The DPK is ready to assist them in forging ahead in their national democratic movement and to cooperate and collaborate with political, national, and progressive organizations of the Baluchi people and their combatant personalities.

We take this opportunity to reassert that our party is willing to cooperate with all political forces of the region and combatants all over the country against the terrorism of the Islamic republic's regime. We consider it the main duty of all individuals, social, cultural, political organizations, and personalities of our country to unite against the clerical regime's terrorism. We also consider it the obligation of all governments to ensure the security of all the political opponents of the Iranian regime in their respective countries and to take a firm and decisive stand against the clerical regime's terrorism.

Obviously, any laxity in this regard is tantamount to giving the clerics' terrorism free reign. Once again, we condemn the murder of Khan and Naru'i, and we consider it a loss for the Baluchi people and convey our sympathies and condolence to their families and relatives and to the people of Baluchestan.

* LE MONDE Puts Foreign Debt at $21.5 Billion

93LA0009B London KEYHAN in Persian 28 Jan 93 p 4

[Text] The "1992 Economic and Social Report," published in mid-January by LE MONDE, estimates Iran's total foreign debt at $21.5 billion. This publication writes that Iran, because of the endless increase of its financial commitments, is facing a shortage of foreign exchange reserves, and this situation has created a huge imbalance in its foreign accounts. The Central Bank of Iran's foreign exchange reserves are only sufficient to pay for three months of the nation's imports.

Last summer, when international economic and financial circles reported that the Islamic Republic was unable to repay its foreign debts, which are constantly becoming heavier, the publication ENERGY COMPASS, in its 2 August 1992 issue, reported that the European Commission advised the European companies dealing with Iran not to give it new credit, because its six-month commitments, which came due nine months ago, have not yet been paid. This publication reports that in the last 18 months Iran's foreign debt has increased from $12 billion to $34 billion, giving as its source the commerce section of Britain's interest office in Iran.

Central Bank Chief's Denial

On the other hand, Mohammad Hoseyn 'Adeli, chief of the Central Bank of Iran, officially announced at a press conference in Tehran that Iran has no foreign debt (the newspaper SALAM, printed in Tehran, 31 Mordad 1371 [23 August 1992]), but 'Adeli was ambiguous on what indebtedness actually is, because he immediately added: "We are planning to make use of $17.5 billion in foreign credits (approved by the Majles for the Five-Year Plan), of which we have so far assembled $15 billion, and have

already used about $6 billion." However, Asghar Kashani, the Central Bank's deputy for foreign exchange, said in Germany that so far $10 billion in foreign credits has been brought into Iran's economy, and most of these credits have been paid by German companies.

The chief of Iran's Central Bank said no when asked if it is true that Iran is having difficulties repaying its foreign debts. He added: "Due to the rapid increase in the nation's imports last year, we faced a negative balance of payments, which we will make up with foreign exchange assets."

Despite all this, the newspapers of Tehran, including the newspaper RESALAT (in its 4 Mordad 1371 [27 July 1992] issue), citing foreign sources including the FINANCIAL TIMES, reported that Iran's commercial banks have already delayed payments on foreign credit accounts by three weeks.

Hoping To Increase Oil Production

Will oil exports, which are considered to be almost Iran's only source of foreign exchange, be able to restore balance to this nation's foreign accounts? In answer to this question, LE MONDE writes that the government of the Islamic Republic has placed its hopes in increasing its oil revenues: "Based on its calculations, the government expects that with the use of $5 billion in oil sector investments, Iran's production will increase from 3.3 million barrels per day in 1991 to 4.5 million barrels in March 1993.

This annual [publication], while emphasizing the economic problems and widespread public dissatisfaction, adds: "Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, president of the republic of Iran, who tried at first to portray this dissatisfaction as insignificant, was finally forced to accept the seriousness of the social situation. In the spring (1992), tens of thousands of people in Shiraz, Arak, Mashhad, and Khorramshahr went into the streets without prior organization to protest high prices, attacked the banks, plundered stores, and set fire to government buildings." The aforementioned publication believes that Rafsanjani, who lacks broad public support, has heard this message from the oppressed people and has decided to stop implementation of major economic reforms, although he still promotes the benefits of a mixed economy that conforms to Islamic principles.

The LE MONDE economic annual adds that Rafsanjani not only faces social resistance to the advancement of reforms. He must also take into account the issue of "opposition from the right-wing conservative faction" (composed of merchants and religious people), which fears both the destruction of a profitable economy and government renewal." Another major obstacle to advancing the reforms is the bad condition of the nation's assets.

This publication also adds: "To get the wheels of the economy going, the government hopes to bring foreign investors into the country, but this problem is too sensitive politically for them to be able to solve it before the 1993 elections for president of the republic. In this regard, it is not clear at this time what to do: the government claims that foreign investment is unregulated, but its practical rules are not yet specified. Worse than that, Principle 81 of the Constitution, which explicitly prohibits foreign investment, remains in force."

* Over One-Fourth of Work Force Unemployed

93LA0009C London KEYHAN in Persian 28 Jan 93 p 4

[Text] Tehran economic circles predict that in the year 1372 [21 Mar 1993-20 Mar 1994] employment in Iran will face unprecedented problems. These circles say that in view of the unification of the foreign exchange rate, many production units will only be able to survive if they can reduce their costs as much as possible, especially in the area of employment. After the Islamic revolution, for political reasons, and mostly because of the imposition of more workers than needed by the revolutionary foundations, labor costs in the producing units increased quickly. In the new economic circumstances that are arising, the unavoidability of eliminating Iran's excess workers will bring Iran against a striking increase in unemployment. International observers of Iranian affairs think that the real level of unemployment in this country is more than the 25 percent figure that is cited by some official sources in the Islamic Republic.

On the other hand, Dr. Asadpur, general manager of population control and family planning in the Ministry of Health, Health Care, and Medical Education, said recently that every year 240,000 people are added to the number of those seeking employment in the country. Asadpur, speaking in the middle of the month of Dey [22 Dec-20 Jan] at a population control seminar in Bandar 'Abbas, said that the growing rate of population growth in recent years has brought Iran against frightening problems. He added that in view of the fact that every year the country's international financial commitments increase, a study has been made of the danger of a shortage of foreign exchange in Iran's economy and an increase in its price in view of the implementation of the uniform foreign exchange rate project. He said: "The failure to realize the expected foreign exchange revenues in the last two years at the budget's projected figure of $20 billion and to distribute it among the ministries meant that the Central Bank was not able to meet some of its international commitments on time. Next year, however, the situation will be completely different. If oil revenues are not injected into the economy in the amount expected, the demand pressure outside the commercial banks will build up, and consequently it will bring us against a significant increase in the price of foreign exchange, which is much more dangerous than it was in previous years."

Dr. Behkish considers the nation's economic growth in the last two years to be the result of the Iranian economy's unemployment capacity. In other words, there has been no progress in investment, but the use level of the capacity of the production units increased from 30 to 90 percent. In this regard he says that: "As of today, the economic problem is subject to investment. If there is no investment, it cannot be expected that we will achieve suitable economic growth."

The chief of the Iran International Chamber of Commerce believes that without clarification of the role of the private sector and foreign investment, the effort to mobilize capital for economic growth will get nowhere: "In the 1372 Budget the role of the private sector, the way of using credit, the financial procurement systems, the importation of foreign capital and foreign participation in the economy are not clear. If we clarify the role of foreign investment in the budget, the role of private sector activity will also be clear."

Nepal

Prime Minister Koirala Leaves for India Visit 26 Mar

BK2603140893 Hong Kong AFP in English 1121 GMT 26 Mar 93

[Text] Kathmandu March 26 (AFP)—Nepalese Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala left here Friday for a three day visit to Varanasi, in India's Bihar state, a Nepalese Foreign Ministry source said.

Koirala was seen off by cabinet colleagues, Nepali Congress parliamentarians, and the Indian Embassy here, the source said.

High on the agenda during Koirala's scheduled meeting with Indian Minister of State for Foreign Affairs R.L. Bhatia is expected to be the controversial Indo-Nepalese Tanakpur accord to build a massive hydro-electric barrage, in part on Nepalese soil.

Opposition parties in Nepal have attacked the accord as unfair, while decrying the method by which it was ratified.

Also on the agenda for Koirala's meeting with Bhatia, who will represent Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao, will be the socio- economic and political situations in India and Nepal.

Koirala is also scheduled to lay a foundation stone at the Centre for Nepalese Studies to constructed [as received] on the campus of the Benares Hindu University.

Koirala will return home on Sunday, the Foreign Ministry source added.

Koirala Returns From India

BK2803131693 Hong Kong AFP in English 1304 GMT 28 Mar 93

[Text] Kathmandu, March 28 (AFP)—Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala returned home Sunday after a three-day visit to the Indian holy city of Varanasi and talks with Indian Foreign Minister R.L. Bhatia, an official source said.

"Prime Minister Koirala and Bhatia discussed matters covering further consolidation of friendship and cooperation between the two countries," press advisor Jaya Prakash Anand said without providing specific details.

Koirala was quoted by the official RSS news agency as saying: "Nepal's relations with India and China are the core of Nepalese foreign policy and it has broadened under the democratic system of government."

"Now that the country has embarked on the path of all round internal development, it is essential for the nation to keep a happy relationship with the international community," he added.

During the visit, Koirala also attended a foundation ceremony for the Center for Nepalese Studies to be constructed at Benares Hindu University (BHU).

Pakistan

Resigned Ministers Plan Drive To Oust Premier

BK2903133193 Karachi DAWN in English 29 Mar 93 pp 1, 6

[Text] Islamabad, March 28—Two federal ministers and an adviser to the prime minister who resigned from their offices vowed on Sunday to launch a campaign to oust Premier Nawaz Sharif.

"Our first target is the party and after that we may think about removing him from the leadership of the Parliament," Planning Minister Hamid Nasir Chattha and Environment Affairs Minister Anwar Saifullah said at a crowded press conference in the federal capital where they also informed the newsmen that Prime Minister's Adviser Asad Junejo, son of the former Prime Minister and PML [Pakistan Muslim League] president late Mohammad Khan Junejo, had also resigned along with them.

"We will do everything to ensure that he (the Prime Minister) is not elected president of the Pakistan Muslim League," Chattha, who was flanked by Senator Basharat Illahi and MNA [Member of the National Assembly] Brig (retd) Asghar, said.

Anwar Saifullah, son-in-law of President Ghulam Ishaq Khan, arrived at Chattha's house in his official car without a flag.

Chattha accused the prime minister of bypassing the Cabinet on major policy issues and monopolising power at the cost of collective Cabinet responsibility. "The Cabinet is not taken into confidence on major policy decisions and the real issues are not debated in the Cabinet as major decisions are taken outside it," he said.

Chattha said ordinances were issued without the approval of the Cabinet and even issues like repealing the 8th Constitutional Amendment was discussed in the PML parliamentary party meeting without discussing it in the Cabinet. He said insignificant decisions were taken at the Cabinet meetings like whether or not to sign an accord with a particular country. "The Cabinet is collectively responsible for the decisions taken but it was never taken into confidence while decisions were made on vital issues," he said.

He said although the president issues ordinances on the advice of the prime minister, the prime minister was bound to take the advice of the Cabinet, which he never took. The two ministers said although the immediate cause of their resignation was the manner in which the prime minister tried to get himself nominated as a candidate for party's presidentship but they had been feeling uneasy since long because of his undemocratic attitude.

They accused the prime minister of showing "indecent haste" to succeed as PML president after the death of Muhammad Khan Juneo a week earlier.

Narrating the incidents that followed Junejo's death, Chattha said that the day he received the news about Junejo's death, three federal ministers Ghulam Dastagir Khan, Malik Naeem and Abdul Sattar Lalika approached him and sought his help in appointing Nawaz Sharif as the party president.

"I thought they had come to condole with me the death of my leader as I was like a family member of Junejo family, but they sought my help in appointing Nawaz Sharif as president of the PML. I told them it was not an appropriate time as the body of Mr Junejo had not even arrived in Pakistan," Chattha said.

He said the next day he went to Lahore to receive the body of Mr Junejo which was arriving from New York. He said there he met the prime minister on latter's request at the Governor's House. "I even told the prime minister that we should allow a decent interval to discuss such issues but they insisted to hold a meeting of party elders on March 26 to nominate a candidate for the party presidentship despite his opposition. [no end quote marks as published] He said later he was informed that the meeting would be held on March 27 which he attended.

Chattha said Punjab Chief Minister Ghulam Haider Wyne also met him in Lahore to convince him and seek his support for the prime minister, but "I told him that they should wait for at least 49 days, a normal mourning time."

The planning minister said he also conveyed to the party leadership that since there was no other candidate for the party presidentship except Nawaz Sharif, they should not try to rush the matter.

He said during Saturday's meeting, which nominated Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif as a candidate for the PML presidentship, the loyalists of the prime minister passed resolution nominating Sharif as a candidate although the meeting was not attended by party Secretary General Iqbal Ahmad Khan, chief organiser Ejazul Haq and representatives from Sindh and NWFP [Northwest Frontier Province]. He said some members also asked for advancing the election date fixed by acting president of the party Nawabzada Abdul Ghafoor Hoti.

He said there were a lot of new faces among the party leaders whom he could not recognise. Besides, he said, there was demand that office should go to Balochistan.

He said he again pleaded to adjourn the meeting after passing a condolence resolution but some of the members passed a resolution nominating Nawaz Sharif. "Better sense did not prevail and I thought people were no more interested in a consensus candidate so I walked out of the meeting by making it clear that I am not a party to the resolution," Chattha said.

Chattha said after his walkout a number of his Cabinet colleagues visited him requesting himn to withdraw his opposition to the prime minister which he refused.

The planning minister said he was already fed up of the government and on many occasions had requested late Mr Junejo to allow him to resign but the permission was not granted by the party president.

Asked whether there was a division in the Cabinet on the privatisation of public sector units, Chattha said the concept of privatisation was agreed in principle by the Cabinet. "The manner in which it is being implemented was never discussed."

Asked whether he feared his expulsion from the party after his resignation from the Cabinet, Mr Chattha said his family was an old Muslim Leaguer. "I will stay as Muslim Leaguer even when other people will leave Muslim League," he said.

He said he had not lobbied anyone for resigning from his post along with him and recalled that Anwar Saifullah had not walked out from Saturday's meeting of the Muslim League elders from which he had walked out.

Anwar Saifullah seconded the allegations levelled by Chattha against the Prime Minister and said: "I am also tendering my resignation."

Asked whether he was influenced by the president, who is at loggerheads with the prime minister to resign from the Cabinet, Anwar Saifullah said though the president was his father-in-law for whom he had highest esteem, but "we never involve the president in the family affairs."

Explaining his position, Saifullah said he felt there should be a consensus candidate. He said while the acting president of the PML, the secretary general and the chief organiser of the party were not present in Saturday's meeting, his province was also not fully represented as senior and important Muslim Leaguers from NWFP were also not present. "We had assured the Prime Minister that there was no one to challenge him and therefore there was no need for this indecent haste," he said.

Saifullah said traditionally, at least 40 days' mourning period is observed before nominating or electing a new president after the death of the party chief, but the ruling class did not care for even this tradition.

He said the NWFP Chief Minister Mir Afzal Khan had also advised the prime minister to allow holding of meeting of provincial councils to evolve a consensus

among the provincial organisations of the party but the advice was apparently not taken.

Nasir Chattha answering another question said the prime minister was illegally holding dual office—of PML Punjab president and of prime ministership—in clear violation of the party's constitution.

Asked how strong was his group, Chattha said: "I have no group, but from today we will try to lobby within our party to do what is right."

He made it clear that anyone elected now as the president of the party would be for an interim period i.e. up to May when the party elections are scheduled to be held for all offices at the central level.

Questioned about the reported letters written by the president to the prime minister in which Ghulam Ishaq Khan had reportedly expressed his disapproval over certain government decisions, Chattha said he had no knowledge about any such letter.

He said by resigning from their posts, they were only registering their protest. "We will try to mobilise support to oppose Nawaz Sharif within the party and if we are successful we may try for a change of leadership in the assembly," he added.

Asked about his views on the 8th Constitutional Amendment, Hamid Nasir Chattha said he was one of the persons who had supported the 8th Amendment during its passage. "I had not supported this amendment as a compromise but because I believed in it and it shall not be removed till year 2000," he added.

Chattha said Prime Minister's Advisor Asad Junejo would arrive from his home-town Sindhri sometime Sunday evening with a specific purpose to tender his resignation. "You can come and meet him here in the evening," he said.

Sharif on Ties With India, Nuclear Policy, Afghanistan

BK3003084293 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Overseas Service in English 0800 GMT 30 Mar 93

[Text] The prime minister, Mr. Mohammad Nawaz Sharif, has expressed the hope that India would adopt a positive attitude and facilitate a settlement of all disputes with Pakistan. In interview with German daily BERLINER MORGENPOST, he said Pakistan is determined to continue its efforts to evolve a negotiated solution for the Kashmir problem and other bilateral issues. Referring to Pakistan's nuclear policy, Mr. Mohammad Nawaz Sharif said it is entirely peaceful and that Pakistan is committed to the goal of nonproliferation in South Asia. On Afghanistan question, the prime minister lauded the Afghan leaders for signing the peace accord. The prime minister also referred to the destruction of historic Babri mosque in India by the Hindu fanatics, who, he said, had only further vitiated the atmosphere of Pak-India relations.

Attempt To Declare Nation 'Terrorist' State Viewed

BK2803135593 Islamabad THE PAKISTAN TIMES in English 28 Mar 93 p 6

[Editorial: "A Baseless Charge"]

[Text] In an interview with a foreign newspaper, Prime Minister Mohammad Nawaz Sharif strongly reacted to the attempts by some United States political leaders to declare Pakistan a terrorist state. "Any suggestions about Pakistan's involvement in terrorist activities anywhere are totally false and unfounded," he declared. The Prime Minister added that "as law-abiding members of the international community, we are opposed to terrorism in all its forms and manifestations." Earlier, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Mohammad Siddique Khan Kanjoo said in Islamabad that being a signatory to international conventions on terrorism, Pakistan had expressed its abhorrence of terrorist acts suchf as bomb attacks, hijacking and killing of innocent people anywhere, including the India-held state of Jammu and Kashmir.

Pakistan has time and again denied any involvement in the happenings in Indian Punjab or in India-held Kashmir where the people have spontaneously risen in revolt against the stranglehold of India and the atrocities being perpetrated upon them. Whereas Pakistan wholeheartedly supports the just struggle of the Kashmiri people for their right of self-determination, this support is diplomatic, political and moral. There is no question of any complicity in terrorist activities. The Kashmir uprising is self-sustained and unrelenting and is only due to India's obduracy in not yielding to the popular demand of the people who are being held in bondage against their will. No country has any proof of Pakistan's involvement in terrorist activities. Despite a spate of Press reports in the United States linking Pakistan with the recent acts of terrorism in the country, the US administration thinks that it is not involved in any of them. In fact, the US State Department has expressed its appreciation of Pakistan's cooperation in the Kansi case or "wherever the CIA or FBI needs help." Moreover, the Indian allegation that Pakistan is involved in the blasts in Bombay is preposterous. It has been revealed by Indian investigators that 450 kilograms of explosives were deployed in Bombay and the cost of the operation was estimated at 15 million dollars. Could Pakistan ever afford to spend such a fabulous amount, and for what gain? It has been made clear by Pakistan that it intends to dispel all doubts about its complicity in any kind of terrorist activity. It has set up an anti-terrorist cell in the Ministry of Interior to counter terrorist activities in Pakistan and to get in touch with similar international authorities to make its contribution to anti-terrorist activities worldwide. Steps are also being taken to facilitate visits of foreign journalists, including Indian parliamentarians, observers or human rights organisations to the areas along the border and Line of Control in Kashmir to assess the situation for themselves. This is in

addition to the proposal already made for the posting of neutral international observers on both sides of the Line of Control to verify charges of traffic and transportation of material across the Line. Is India prepared to take any such step? The fact is that the charge of terrorism should be directed against the country which is engaged in massive atrocities and grave human rights violations in Occupied Kashmir and has prevented neutral observers from visiting the Vally. As Mr. Kanjoo said, India's state terrorism has been condemned in India and throughout the world by such organisations as Amnesty International and Asia Watch. It is now for impartial observers to decide as to which country deserves to be declared a terrorist state.

Editorial Rejects Label of Terrorist State

BK2903124193 Islamabad THE NATION in English 29 Mar 93 p 6

[Editorial: "Charge of terrorism"]

[Text] Sharad Pawar, the Chief of Maharashtra has joined his voice with that of BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] to hold Pakistan responsible for the Bombay blasts. The evidence produced so far to substantiate that charge is one, who planted the bombs were Muslims, two, that they might have escaped to Pakistan via Dubayy and three, that the material to manufacture the bombs could only have been supplied by Pakistan's ISI [Inter-Service Intelligence]. Pawar would have the world believe that but for Pakistan the Indian Muslims were incapable of wreaking vengeance on the Hindu community which which slaughtered nearly two thousand Muslims in Bombay only a few days back. Basing their surmises on such myths, they hope to make Pakistan the scapegoat. It suits them in two convenient ways. First, it shifts world attention from Hindu communalism which has plans of its own about the ethnic cleansing of the Muslims in India. And secondly, by linking the Muslim fight against Indian atrocities in Kashmir and Muslim counter attacks against the Shiv Sena/BJP terrorism elsewhere in India, a case can be made out to declare Pakistan a terrorist state. Had Pakistan allowed the hijacked Indian Airline plane to land in Lahore the other day, it would have tremendously helped their case. Therefore, it would not be too far fetched to assume that the hijack drama was specially enacted by India to implicate Pakistan. It failed because Pakistan saw through it. That Pakistan should expect more of such dramas is possible so long as the US and UK continue to lend a willing ear to the Indian government. India is desperately trying to perpetuate its occupation of Kashmir, so the pleas to declare Pakistan a terrorist state will continue.

The US Administration is, of course, not naive enough to confuse struggle for self-rule with terrorism. Had it been that naive the US public opinion would not have supported wars of liberation all over the globe. The fact that Kashmir's occupation by Indian troops has no de jure status is also well known to them. But our support of Kashmiri struggle happens to be a useful stick to beat Pakistan with in order to make it comply with US diktat on the nuclear issue, so why not use it. India hopes to cash in on that US mind-set to achieve goals of its own. So far as Pakistan is concerned, Indians are welcome to shout themselves hoarse and the US is welcome to listen to their lies, but so long as our conscience is clear we do not have to submit to blackmail from anyone.

'Strict Vigilance' Called For Along Afghan Border

BK3003082593 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 29 Mar 93 p 7

[Editorial: "Rehabilitating a Border"]

[Text] It is commonly acknowledged that Pakistan both benefited and suffered because of the long war in Afghanistan, which formally ended with the fall of the Najibollah government last year. On the one hand, the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan earned Pakistan the status of a frontline state and brought dollops of western economic aid and military assistance. On the other hand, Islamabad was sucked deeply into costly, protracted conflict which was never really its own. Now things have changed. With the end of the Afghan war the blessings have evaporated in thin air, but sufferings remain.

One incident which took place in Balochistan's Zhob district on Thursday proves this point. That day a group of Afghans clashed with the members of the Frontier Corps and kidnapped 26 of them, including a major, besides killing two. The clash took place when an FC contingent was conducting raids to recover one of their non-commissioned officers, abducted from a town near the Pak-Afghan border by Afghans headed by Mullah Abdul Salam. According to press reports the killing and kidnapping of FC personnel was Mr Abdul Salam's way to settle scores: Two weeks back the Frontier Corps had raided one of his camps and recovered huge quantities of arms and ammunition, including Stinger missles. Now frantic efforts are being made by concerned authorities to recover the kidnapped FC men who have apparently been taken across the border into Afghanistan.

The incident goes a long way to show how porous the Pak-Afghan border has become. It also highlights the brazenness of certain Afghan groups and their scant respect for the laws of this land. Efforts to maintain law and order which in any way hurt their interest (Abdul Salam was all set to sell the Stingers to a third party just before they were seized) are firmly resisted even it means killing and kidnapping security personnel. Apart from this particular incident, on numerous occasions in the past criminals and drug smugglers have used the inability of the administration to block the free flow of men and material across the Pak-Afghan border to further their nefarious goals.

The administration often complains that there are too many holes to be plugged along the Pak-Afghan border to rectify the situation. It also says that some Afghans, now used Pakistani territory as an extension of their own

country, find it impossible to observe the international rules governing border lines between sovereign countries. Now all this is true, and even inevitable—a price which we have to pay for our previous rulers' misadventures. But that should not become an argument for inaction. A lot can still be done to restore the sanctity of the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Strict vigilance, deployment of more border security forces, and better coordination with the new rulers in Kabul and other such measures can achieve this.

Minister Sees Afghanistan as Link to Central Asia

BK2703080493 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 27 Mar 93

[Text] Defense Minister Syed Ghaus Ali Shah has said that lasting peace in Afghanistan is in the best interests of the region because Afghanistan could prove the best source of a link for promoting trade and cultural ties between Pakistan and the Central Asian republics. Talking to newsmen in Sukkur yesterday, he said Pakistan has long-standing religious, historic, and cultural ties with Muslim Central Asian states and these will be further strengthened.

Iranian Minister Gives Rafsanjani Letter to President

BK2803143693 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1400 GMT 28 Mar 93

[Text] Iran has assured full support to Pakistan in solution of various problems confronting the Muslim ummah [community], including the Kashmir, Palestine, and Bosnia-Herzegovina issues. These are expected to be discussed at the ICO [Islamic Conference Organization] foreign ministers conference being held in Karachi next month. This assurance has been given by the Iranian president, Mr. 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, in a letter addressed to the president, Mr. Ghulam Ishaq Khan. The letter was delivered to the president by the Iranian deputy foreign minister for international affairs, Mr. Javad Zarif, who called on him in Islamabad today.

President Ghulam Ishaq Khan warmly reciprocated the Iranian president's desire for mutual cooperation and coordination on all international issues of common interest to the Muslim ummah. The president hoped that the forthcoming conference of the ICO foreign ministers will help evolve broadest possible consensus among Islamic countries on all such issues in order to enhance the unity of the Muslim world.

Uzbek Delegation Arrives in Islamabad

BK3003024693 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Overseas Service in English 1600 GMT 29 Mar 93

[Text] A seven-member delegation from Uzbekistan led the first deputy minister for foreign economic relations, Ratbek Rustambekov arrived in Islamabad today. During their four-day stay, they will discuss with Pakistan officials avenues of cooperation in different fields. The leader of the delegation told newsmen that the whole aim of their visit is to have the first Joint Ministerial Commission meeting and discuss various fields where both countries can cooperate. He said their special emphasis would be to discuss joint ventures in the fields of textiles, agriculture, oil refining, and trade.

Sri Lanka

President Urges Strong Mandate To Solve Northeast 'Problem'

BK2603130093 Colombo LANKAPUVATH in English 1014 GMT 26 Mar 93

["OANA/pool" item]

[Text] Colombo, Mar 26 (LANKAPUVATH)—President Ranasinghe Premadasa exhorted the United National Party's [UNP] frontliners Thursday to seek a popular mandate at the forthcoming provincial council (PC) elections to decide on a once and for all solution to the north-east problem conducive to lasting peace and co-existance, based on the recommendations of the parliamentary Select Committee headed by Mangala Moonesinghe. He also called upon the partymen to impress on the people the need to have a strong mandate and an administration in the context of implementing such a solution. He also explained that the government would give due consideration to the recommendations of the all party conference and other organisations, groups and individuals in deciding on a solution. Addressing a meeting of the UNP Executive Committee held at "Sirikotha", Pitakotte, the president also asked the party activists to explain to the people how the government had faithfully implemented the party manifesto—a new deal and a new vision during the last four years of its existence. "Tell the people that almost the entire manifesto has now been implemented and steps are being taken to fulfil promises still outstanding within the next two years".

The president also called upon the executive committee to draw the attention of the people to the urgent need to decide on a consensus solution to the northeast problem which was the main stumbling block to the country's peace and progress. "We must make a resolve on this occasion to take a hard decision on a solution worked out through the process of consultation, compromise and consensus and stick to it, and go ahead with its implementation, come hell or high water. That is our tradition. You know that we have faced many a problem for the last four years. And in every instance, we have consulted all, listened to all. And once a decision was taken we stuck to it without giving in to hostile forces no matter how formidable they were. As a result, we have built for ourselves a favourable image not only nationally, but also internationally, we won the faith of the nation and also of the international community. We could win such high degree of confidence here and abroad thanks to the

co-operation you all have extended. I am grateful to you all for that. We have won successive elections. Let us win the mandate of the people at the coming elections too. We believe in the people and the people believe in us. We should be so careful as not to do anything that can damage the faith that the people have placed in us. Let us remember that we should not seek power and position to glorify ourselves. And we are only seeking to do some good to the people. Let us look forward to win all the eight provincial councils. Our victory is the victory of the people", the president said.

Spokesman Denies Lull in Northeast Military Operation

BK2603131493 Colombo LANKAPUVATH in English 1023 GMT 26 Mar 93

["OANA/pool" item]

[Text] Colombo, Mar 26 (LANKAPUVATH)—Military spokesman Brigadier Nalin Angammana Friday categorically denied the allegation that there was a lull in north, east [as received] with regard to military operations from the side of the government security forces. Brig. Angammana responding to questions raised by journalists at the weekly cabinet news briefing in Colombo said: "There is no lull in the north and the east from our side. We are continuing our operations. The Thoppigala operation is continuing."

The military spokesman said that during the past week, five LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] terrorists were killed by troops, two at Ampara and three in Batticaloa District. He said one soldier was shot dead by LTTE cadres in Trincomalee, Wednesday. Brigadier Angammana further said that troops are continuing in expanding the forward defence localities (FDLS) in Vavuniya. "We are continuing towards Chettikulam area", he said. The military spokesman said that it is the LTTE who abducted the three TELO [Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization] members who were travelling in a SLTB [Sri Lanka Transport Board] bus from Batticaloa to Sittandy Wednesday. The brigadier said that the country's political plan is not restricting the military plan.

Task Force Kills 'High-Ranking' LTTE Terrorist

BK2703121493 Colombo LANKAPUVATH in English 1035 GMT 27 Mar 93

["OANA/pool" item]

[Text] Colombo, 27 Mar (LANKAPUVATH)—The Special Task Force (STF) commandos Friday shot dead a high ranking LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] terrorist in a confrontation at Akkaraipattu in the eastern Ampara District.

A spokesman for the Joint Operations Command (JOC) told LANKAPUVATH Saturday that the military leader of the terrorist organisation's 48-base complex 'Major' Lloyd alias 'Kalaruban' (Athpudam) was killed around 1700 hours Friday. The commandos later recovered one .38 mm revolver along with some ammunition and grenades at the place of incident.

At Morawewa in northern province's Welioya area, government troops successfully repulsed a terrorist attack in the early hours of Saturday morning inflicting casualties on them. When the terrorists launched an attack on the security forces defences and attempted to infiltrate through gaps along the bunker lines, the troops fought back effectively and repulsed the attack. The terrorists then withdrew with their casualties. In a search operation launch soon after the incident, troops had come across many signs which confirmed terrorist casualties, but details are not available at present, the spokesman said.

Three soldiers were also killed in action.

Meanwhile, the security forces ambushed and shot dead four terrorists at Kurunthanmadu in the eastern Batticaloa District on Friday. They also recovered one AK-47, one T-56 and one T-81 rifles and three hand grenades.

Over 200 LTTE Men Killed by Armed Forces in Last 3 Months

BK2803095093 Colombo LANKAPUVATH in English 0910 GMT 28 Mar 93

["OANA/pool" item]

[Text] Colombo, Mar 28 (LANKAPUVATH)—Over 200 LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] terrorists have been killed by the security forces during the first three months of this year. A military spokesman told LANKAPUVATH that according to latest statistics compiled by the Joint Operations Command (JOC) that in the north 50 terrorists were confirmed killed in security operations in January, seven in February and 75 in March, including 64 killed in air raids by Sri Lankan Air Force ground-attack aircraft and helicopters. The sources said that in the east 90 terrorists were confirmed killed and another 70 LTTE cadres captured. Among those killed were a number of LTTE group and area leaders. The latest being the Tigers military leader of the 48 base complex at Akkaraipattu in the Ampara district Lloyd alias Kala Ruban alias Athpudam.

The military spokesman also said that the security forces had conducted 20 major operations in northern and eastern Sri Lanka in the January-March period in 1993. They included operations—"Black Fox", 1 and 2, Jaya Gaga, Jaya Pahara, Vanatharana, Ranabima, Ranavisi and Operation Sumana being currently conducted in the eastern Batticaloa district.

Meanwhile, military intelligence reports have revealed an LTTE build-up being personally directed by terrorist leader Prabhakaran from his headquarters in Jaffna. However, the military spokesman said that Sri Lanka's security forces were in a state of readiness to meet any contingency caused by the LTTE and hit back hard at the Tigers.

Imports From India Increase to $292 Million in 1992

BK2803095493 Colombo LANKAPUVATH in English 0915 GMT 28 Mar 93

["OANA/pool" item]

[Text] Colombo, Mar 28 (LANKAPUVATH)—Imports from India to Sri Lanka is expected to increase appreciably during this year. Trade sources told LANKAPUVATH that this was mainly due to the Indian products becoming more competitive following the budget announcement on full convertibility of the rupee. According to these sources Indian exports to Sri Lanka has recorded a striking increase during 1992. Indian exports during the year totalled 292 million dollars as against 220 million dollars in 1991.